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SAYS MRS. CROWLEY, SAYS SHE !

Says Mrs. Crowley, says she!

BY

DORAN HURLEY

*Author of Monsignor, The Old Parish, and
Herself : Mrs. Patrick Crowley*



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SAYS MRS. CROWLEY, SAYS SHE!

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TO
MOM-MOM
AND
BINNIE
AND
BROTHER VIN

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Both Mrs. Patrick Crowley and Doran Hurley deeply thank Father Joachim V. Benson, M.S.S.T., editor of *The Preservation of the Faith* for his kindly permission to use the talk on Pope Pius the Twelfth which appeared in his magazine ; and Father Francis X. Talbot, S.J., not merely for his consent to the use of the *America* conversations but more than that for all his great affectionate kindness to them both.

A FRIEND SPEAKS



HERE was an old lady who did not mind being thought old. She would, at the flicker of your eye, tell you approximately how old she really was. But you would not altogether believe her. She might have lived the number of years she alleged ; but you thought to yourself that she was either one third or double that old. For her spirit always remained fresh and young, while her wisdom and her positivism always appeared to be immemorially old.

I first knew the old lady when I was a schoolboy. She was a neighbor, an Irish neighbor, on the street below where we lived. We boys and girls used to quote her quite a lot, for our amusement. Then some years later, I knew the old lady, but not so flip-pantly, down in Maryland. She presided over a large old manorhouse in the grand and ancient Irish style. Her home was at a cross-roads in the rolling country. But the gathering of the roads had little to do with the number of her visitors. The folk would

have gathered around her if she were far off the beaten tracks. In my maturer middle life, I knew the old lady best of all. She happened to be my own mother. And I discovered she was the old lady, not through my own canniness, but through the insight of our friends. They had chosen her for her candid appraisals of them, when they needed it, for the very right advice she would freely give them, if they asked her, for her gracious little way of showing them that she liked them all, and no exception, for her intensity and her charity, for her lordly ladiness and her honest humilities. Then later, I grew fond of the old lady when she lived in a small apartment off the edge of Greenwich Village in New York. She was a trifle more sophisticated, she would smoke a cigarette and take a drink, play old Irish airs and read Irish poems with a lilt that was impeccably perfect. She had a bite in her tongue, these days, but then she was living in a different world. Still, she was just as wise and more than witty, just as kindly and no less approachable, as loved and respected as ever before, and always listened to with profit.

I have known the old lady in a great number of cities, in most diverse environments, and at slightly different ages, as birthdays are counted. I am con-

ceited enough to declare that she always liked me, and somehow adopted me. That may be because I liked her the moment I caught up with her, no matter where she happened to be. In these past few years, I run across her very rarely. Sadly, I fear that we may be seeing the end of her in our country. What with Ireland now called Eire, and most of the young colleens staying at home, and promises of better faring in all the twenty-six Counties, and no gold to be picked up wherever you looked in the States, we are missing the old lady more and more.

I never had the name of the old lady until Doran Hurley gave it to me. And it is a good and a proud name. He wrote her up in an article which he sent me for *America*. I knew her at the first reading. She was my old lady, done grandly into typewriting. It was the first time I had viewed her that way. He knew her up in Fall River or one of those towns of Massachusetts, not that it makes much difference. Her name — for him — was Mrs. Patrick Crowley, and you could not find a better. I remember that I thanked Doran for running her through his type machine, and asked him to investigate her further, and report on her new doings. Meanwhile, because he was man enough to share her with me, I came to

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know her better. For the first time in my life, I had a chance to adopt her, and I did so, in gratitude for the times she had adopted me through all the years.

Doran was not a bit jealous, and why should he be ? She is not like the young things that set their heart on one of us human beings and exile all others, or hold us inferior. She is more like God, who loves us all and cannot find enough people to love. Well, Doran kept me informed about Mrs. Patrick in story after story. When he had finished enough of them to fill a book, we thought that we should put Herself inside the covers.

Now she was not a bit offended, for she is not modest in a shrinking way, nor is she humble where a good is to be done. I think she was a slight shade flattered that we should think of her as a book. I know that she was terribly excited when Doran gave her the leading part in a play he had written. In her wisdom, she knew that she was going to gain a great number of new friends, and she likes to mix the new with the old, with no disrespect to any one of them.

The last word Doran gave me was that she approved his gathering up her parts, binding them together, and embossing her name on the outside. But

she put a condition. In this, she spoke with all the autocracy of Mrs. Patrick Crowley — whose ancestors were from the noble and good blood of Ireland, whose folk were a credit to their parish and their priests, whose sons and their fathers before them were the best citizens of America. She made it plain as the bare hand before you, with no mistaking, that she would have none of his book unless he got me to say a good word in the beginning of it.

Doran and I know that it is not wise to cross her, if she has her mind set on a thing. And so that is the reason for this Preface. But apart from her commands, I wanted to do the page or two because I would never miss the chance of boasting that I knew Herself.

The truth is, everybody knows Herself, whether her name is Mrs. Patrick Crowley, or Mrs. Michael Murphy, or Mrs. Bid Johnny. She is a universal, that Ireland used to send over here, or that grew up here in a part of Ireland that was shipped across the sea. She has more wisdom than all the men of her kin put together, she looks right into the heart of every living thing, she rules through the thought that comes to her tongue. And though we be eighty

years of age, but active still, we begin moving around, as if we were furniture, when Herself, the Matriarch, gives us the call to do something.

Doran Hurley is the true spokesman of Herself. He has written down a lot of fictions that are as true as Herself. He is her first biographer, and the wonder grows that no one ever bothered before to make a book out of her. Just now, Doran passed the hint to me that she wants to get a word in edgewise herself, and for me not to be doing all the talking. And so, we had better skip into the first chapter and meet Herself, the inimitable Mrs. Patrick Crowley.

FRANCIS X. TALBOT, S.J.

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CONCERNING
THE NEW PASTOR



HAD been away from the Old Parish for several years. In the continuity of time the years were not many . . . like Aggie Kelly, our former organist, I still cling to a fading youth . . . but time enough, I knew, for me to find many changes.

I realized, of course, that I would meet few of those with whom I had gone to Sunday School and played as a boy. The economic depression reached Millington long before 1929. Ours was once a great industrial city ; our linen and woolen mills were famous in the nation ; but shortly after the close of the World War our mills closed never to re-open. The manufacturers of linen moved their plants closer to the fields of flax ; the woolen mills moved west, to be near the sheep and their shearing. The four-legged sheep ; for even in my day we had little else among our factory stockholders than balky rams and

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silly ewes ceaselessly bleating for added dividends that were in the end to send the mills away. The world in the interval had moved on while Millington was fighting progress.

So my own generation, in a single industry city, once the whirr of the looms had stopped — and as a consequence all other local opportunity, had been forced to flee far afield to other more progressive cities scattered throughout the nation.

In the Old Parish now it is only the old folk who are left. I never realized it quite so well . . . and so sadly . . . as on my journey home last year. The Old Parish, I had thought as a boy, would never change . . . it could not.

Nor can it . . . nor will it change in its essential integrity. Yet still, returning, there were those I looked for I could not see . . . nor ever shall . . . until maybe later. The Pope's Johnny Sullivan for one, whose hopes and prayers for me had been that I should be true to the Old Parish if I ever became the writing lad for which he had marked me. The Sullivan girls were gone, of the glorious voices and musicianly knowledge, whose friendship makes me able today to appreciate alike Palestrina and Gilbert and Sullivan, Flagstad at the opera and Marion

Anderson in Carnegie Hall, the Boston Symphony and the Paulist Choir.

Aunt Toby is gone, whose graham bread would have been the ambrosia of the gods had they been omnipotent enough to have known of it. They weren't, and they didn't ; or I'd be a pagan tomorrow . . . almost. Almost, because Aunt Toby . . . aunt by courtesy and deep affection . . . would have had nothing to do with me if I were. It was for no pagan that she baked her special graham loaves and hurried to the house with them as soon as she learned I was home from college ; or in her age . . . when she no longer baked herself . . . made pilgrimage down town when I was back from New York to find graham bread for me that was nearest like to her own.

There were others almost as important for whom I used to search on fleeting Christmas visits to Mother, who now, herself, lives sixty miles away. But going back "for good" as we say, outside the circle of the Aunts, it has been rather lonely. As the Mission Father said one time, "I see a lot of faces here that have passed on since I gave my sermon on Death last year."

However, my closest and dearest comrade . . .

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for all the disparity in ages . . . still happily remains in the Old Parish, as alert and vigorous as when I rode "white horse to Banbury Cross" upon her lap. Age does not wither nor time stale the infinite variety of Mrs. Patrick Crowley.

At our first meeting we spoke at length, of course, of all that had changed and of our remembrance of times past.

"Ah, but, boy," she said, with a rueful smile, "it's well for you to go away and come back. I stay here and have to see the world and the parish changing under my very eyes.

"Most of all, I miss the old pastor. He was so like the words of the song, that I never let anyone sing it in my presence . . . the one about *Father O'Flynn*. 'Kindliest creature and tenderest teacher and powerfulest preacher in old Donegal.' Not that he was so much on the heavy sermonizing . . . it used to break his heart when he'd have to get up in the pulpit and plead for money . . . but the rest of it has him to a 'T.'

"Now the new pastor, I agree with the rest of them, is a born executive. He has a great business head on him ; and he certainly has done wonders for the parish in the ten years he has been over us. The

church is all fixed-up and redecorated, new altars, new pews and new stations ; and we have a grand parish school now on the backlot behind the rectory where the boys used to play ball and the old lads pitch their horseshoes. They have a pitching place now ; but it doesn't seem the same. Will you ever forget the gaiety there was, the evening the old pastor stopped on his way over to church to 'hear' for First Friday and scored not one but three ringers against Charlie O'Toole, the Holy Name champion ? We could talk of nothing else for days !

"Oh, the new pastor is a cracker-jack, don't let anyone tell you different. He's up to the minute in everything. We have a special boys' choir now for the High, sitting up in high pews at either side of the altar, in cassock and surplice, singing the same chants they tell me are sung over at Saint Peter's in Rome. Aggie Kelly, you know, is choir director and organist now down at the Church of Our Lady of Krakow.

"Yes, and the new pastor is giving a series of instructions every Tuesday night in what they call the seminary room of the new school on the proper use of the Missal. Constance Casey and her crowd are responsible. I tell you we are up with the best of

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them, as modern in the parish as any. We're very advanced.

"It was only the Sunday before you arrived that young Father McCabe . . . Pat's son, you know is our junior curate, Pat that used to sing the Requiems along with Aggie Kelly . . . announced from the altar that he was going to start a new lecture course on Modern Catholic Writers. I listened very carefully, but I couldn't be sure I heard the names right. Belloc, Maritain, Undset, were some of them. They sounded very foreign to me. The others I couldn't quite get ; for since the new pastor has had this public address system put in, every one of the priests talks so low and the thing blares so loud that with the echo and the roaring, they are anything but clear and plain. In the old days, a Mission Father speaking from the steps of the altar without aid of any kind would take shame if he couldn't be heard as far as the rectory, once he got into the swing of it.

"I was sorry Sunday, too, for I remember well the lecture course the old pastor gave one year. On Catholic writers at that. It was a fine course. You could not get next to near the old parish hall once the word got around. They came from all over.

Every parish in the city was represented no less than our own. Every parish in the city, including the Hibernians, was what Pat McCabe said at the time. Pat was a great wag in his day, but his son is very serious-minded ; and he certainly hasn't got his father's voice. When Pat used to sing *The Felons of Our Land* on Patrick's Night it would ring in your ears for hours after. But the son mumbles when he talks, so that you'd almost think you were hard of hearing. And there's nothing the matter with my ears, if people would only speak plain.

"I was quite taken with his announcement about the lecture series, but I was sorry to slip up on some of the other names. Not one of those I heard meant a three-penny bit to me.

"It is the new order of things, I suppose. It was my luck to have Constance Casey and old Teresa Mahoney in the pew with me, and to sit between them. The both of them sniffing every time my beads rattled against the back of the pew in front of me. I never cared to do as some do, crouch back on their haunches, their beads in their lap. Anyway, I thought the way those two that Sunday rustled the pages of their big Missals, five leaps ahead or five

laps behind the priest all the time, and kept throwing the colored ribbons in and out all during Mass, I wasn't the only one causing distraction. And I do think it is more pious to form the words of my prayers on my lips, not just simply think them.

"No matter. As I was saying, there were some great writers that the old pastor told us about in the lecture course he gave. John Boyle O'Reilly was one ; James Jeffrey Roche was another, and D'Arcy McGee. There was Canon Sheehan and Father Abram Ryan and Maurice Francis Egan, and Pat Guiney's daughter, Louise. He was colonel in the Massachusetts Irish Ninth. My father knew him well. You know, I rarely hear tell of any of them now. I suppose they are maybe out of date ; but I don't like to think that they are forgotten. Good Americans they were, all of them ; and did a lot for the Church at a time when it was not fashionable among writing people. Of course, Canon Sheehan wasn't rightly American ; but he was the next thing to it being Irish. What is it they used to say : just one of the Sheehans that missed the boat ?

"I like the new ways ; I really do. I like to keep up with the times. It did my heart good a-Sunday, for all I may talk, to see Constance Casey deep in her

Missal reading away for dear life, instead of bobbing her head back and forth to see who had a new hat.

“Yes and I like the sound of the little fellows singing the real Mass music. Not that they could ever hold a candle to Pat McCabe and Aggie Kelly at a Requiem. I always thought it would be a foretaste of what was in store for you in Heaven to lay in your casket comfortably, and have them send you off with the *Dies Irae* and the *De Profundis* sung as only they could sing it. I still look forward to their singing them at my own passing.

“It’s from having known only the best, you see, that I wish that the new pastor, right as he is no doubt, hadn’t changed everything so all of a sudden. To tell you the truth I miss some of the hymns, the *Adoro Te* and *Pie Jesu* that Aggie used to sing in a way that was so like the angels, and the *Salve Regina* that Pat McCabe was so mortally good in.

“But now we don’t even have one of them at the close of Mass. The professor of music we have lets loose on the organ for a grand concert processional march and we file out like an opera chorus, save those who stay for an extra Act of Thanksgiving. But I declare to goodness, I find it very difficult indeed to keep my mind on my Thanksgiving with the organ

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above me pounding away like Patrick Gilmore's band. I can't do it ; and it's then I long most for the old choir and the friendly hymn after Mass.

"Naturally we all have to move with the times ; and after the sermon on the Liturgy the new pastor gave at all the Masses last year, I can see that we were very far behind. It was, I suppose, a makeshift way of doing things we had ; but I do wish he had not rushed ahead quite so fast. Ours was not a bad parish.

"The old pastor was no executive ; but we loved him. We thought a lot of the old pastor, all of us. Do not misunderstand me now, we are behind the new pastor to a man . . . or woman. Of course we are. Yet we do have to realize that he *is* new, and doesn't quite understand.

"For example, I did feel bad about the statues. It was a terrible shock to me that first Sunday to come in to the church and find them gone. We have fine beautiful oil paintings now over the Blessed Virgin's and Saint Joseph's altars that cost a mint of money. The Clancy girls gave them in memory of their father and mother ; and they are handpainted and very liturgical. They were done by the Monterey Guild away out west, and they are beautiful, indeed.

"Yet still for all I am as liturgical-minded now as any of them and can see that it is a great step forward, I do miss some of the old statues. I miss Saint Mary, and I miss the fine big one of Saint Patrick that the Father Mathew Society gave the old pastor on his silver jubilee. It may not have been art, but it was a beautiful thing.

"We have the statue of Our Lady of the Annunciation in the churchyard still ; but last year it was too cold to hold the May procession outside and we had to have it in the church. It did not seem right at all without a real crowning. I used to make a point of going to hear the little girls singing as they marched, all decked out in their First Communion veils and their wreaths of smilax, the little voices piping up : *O Mary We Crown Thee With Blossoms Today* ; and Aggie Kelly in the rear in her Children of Mary outfit to help them out if they got frightened. Only the choir boys and the altar boys and the clergy were in the procession this year and the little Sullivan child, Tim and Katie's youngest, came up from a front pew to lay a bouquet on the altar, while the choir boys sang *Ave Maria*. It was very impressive and dignified, and no doubt correct. But it wasn't the same. I liked the old way better.

“Yes, we are as correct now as any. I heard Constance Casey, no less, telling the Clancy girls that, as they were coming out of Mass one Sunday. And she ought to know, for after she got out of the Sisters here all they had to teach, Mike Casey sent her on to New York and to convents in Paris, France, and Rome, Italy, on top of that. More by the same token, I saw by the parish *Bulletin* last Sunday that Mike gave fifty dollars to the last monthly collection. He could afford it ; his meat is dear enough, and he gets all the rectory trade.

“Yes, we have a *Bulletin* now, a little parish paper that’s gotten out every month ; and that, too, we never had before. It’s a nice little book and you could find good reading in it, if you could only tear yourself away from the list of those who gave to the monthly collection . . . and how much. We have the budget system now in the Old Parish. We put our seat money and the collection money in separate envelops before we leave the house for Mass and drop them into a box in the vestibule. It’s a great bother. It takes so much time to see that your name is written clearly on the collection envelop ; and half the time the pen you have blots, and someone

else gets credit for your donation in the *Bulletin* the next month.

“It all comes out in the *Bulletin*, you see ; and it certainly makes great reading that Sunday. Half the people have their noses stuck in the paper all the way home.

“The whole system is so much more modern than in the old days. For the monthly collection then, the old pastor, himself, would come around with the basket, taking pains to look the other way as you dropped in your quarter or what. Indeed, if he happened to see you and knew you were not working he would push the basket right by you on the end of its pole, even though you had the nickel ready and handy. The time there was the big strike in Millington he cut out all collections — even for seat money — for a whole month, until we went around to the rectory and protested to him. Little as we had, we wanted to do our share for God and His Church. He was a lovely good man ; but, of course, he was no executive.

“I thought of him Sunday week when the last issue of the *Bulletin* came out. There were things in it he wouldn’t have liked. Fifty cents between

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them was all that was down after the Grady sisters' names. That would be Ella and Maggie, who for years were the greatest church workers the Old Parish had. The younger one, Ella, was superintendent of the Sunday School one time ; and both of them were as good as gold. The old pastor, I know, thought the world of them.

"Of course, all they have now is what they get from the State in the way of an Old Age Pension ; and it's not much. They must be a good age, the two of them. They haven't it now to give ; but they gave freely in their day, and not only in money. They lived just for the parish. I felt bad to see their names posted up accusingly that way . . . only fifty cents given between them. They must have felt miserable. Still, Mike Casey, the butcher, gave fifty dollars and Miss Constance ten, so I suppose that made up for the poor Grady girls.

"It's a great parish now. I often wish that the old pastor could have lived to see how modern we are and all the improvements. He would have loved to have seen the new school. He was all in all, always, for the children. He could never have enough of them. It used to be all he could do to make his way to the rectory after the children's Mass, the way

they'd flock around him. How his eyes would shine and his heart leap to see a new school for them and the church all fixed up and all. It is wonderful what this new man has accomplished.

"Yet . . . yet sometimes . . . not that I ever missed early Mass in my own church . . . I like to go to the High, afterwards, down at the Polish. Aggie Kelly is organist there now, and she sometimes gets Pat McCabe in to sing with her. Of course, they're very old-fashioned down there, very out of date. They have more statues than you could shake a stick at, all in very bad taste. Although I will say there is one of Our Lady that I can't help having a feeling for. The shawl is just the right color blue and the girdle and rosary such a rich gold.

"I went down there last Saint Patrick's Day. The word must have got around the city for the church was packed, and not with the Polish either. The poor little priest was crying as he went around with the basket. The green wasn't only on our coats. It was many a day since he saw the like of the green in his basket. I, myself, gave him a dollar.

"Why not! Before Mass began, Aggie Kelly gave a concert on the organ that you would travel many miles and pay twice that, to hear in a hall.

Tunes that *were* tunes, from *The Minstrel Boy* to *God Save Ireland*. And when the priest left the altar and Mass was over, we stayed glued to our seats, Polish and all. Little Father Krasnowski, himself, came back in his cassock to hear her. For the way Aggie Kelly sang *Hail Glorious Apostle* that morning would bring tears to the eyes of Oliver Cromwell. I thought of it all through the lecture the new pastor gave that same night over at the school on *The Mundane Influence of Yeats and Synge in the Keltic Renaissance.*"

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CONCERNING
POPE PIUS XII



ARDLY had the Gabriel bell in the church steeple ceased its nine-fold peal of the Angelus over the Old Parish that March day at noon, than the old historic bell began ringing again, with a great and joyous clamor.

As its voice resounded through the parish we, one and all, stopped our work in instant wonderment. Not since the Pope's Johnny Sullivan . . . God rest him . . . stroked out the glad tidings of the World War Armistice had the Gabriel bell found its tongue with such buoyant, eager happiness.

The gladsome *Te Deum* of the great bell brought us all out of our houses and over to the church on Saint Mary's Street, where the statue of Our Lady of the Annunciation stands blessing the churchyard.

The message that the Gabriel bell was singing out over the Old Parish came to us quickly. Ned Meehan, Larry O'Toole and Tim Sullivan . . . the

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more or less elder statesmen of the Old Parish . . . had been ensconced in Paddy Dailey's barbershop since early morning, their ears glued to Paddy's little radio. It was Ned Meehan who had called the new pastor with the joyous tidings ; and it was the new pastor, himself, no less . . . so we heard . . . who was pulling Gabriel's bellrope so enthusiastically.

"I announce to you with great joy," so the Gabriel bell rang out to us, "we have a Pope, the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli . . . who has taken to himself the name of Pius the Twelfth."

The bell kept ringing and ringing as we gathered in the churchyard.

"'Tis the new Holy Father," Mrs. Patrick Crowley took command of us, "and I wonder who Our Lord gave it to. I kind of had my eye on that cardinal named Mercati myself. He had a face that would make you think of a West of Ireland man . . . or one of the Apostles ; and I have no doubt but that his people were proper McCarthys away back. No doubt his grandfather was all in all with Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone . . . and had to flee the country. Those Italians have a great way

of changing good names to suit their own way of talking."

It was one time when the very right Mrs. Crowley was very wrong ; happily so. We had grouped ourselves together unconsciously about the statue of Our Lady. It was there that the new pastor found us when the bell had stopped its ringing. And it was there at the feet of the Lily of Israel . . . to whom the will of God was made known by the message of an angel . . . that the new pastor announced to us God's choice as our supreme pastor. We knelt with him then in the recitation of the Rosary, that the Hand of God which had rested lovingly upon the shoulder of the new Supreme Pontiff might guide and direct him always.

It was no surprise to us, as we rose to our feet, to find the sidewalk outside the iron churchyard fence crowded with our neighbors . . . men and women who live within the Old Parish boundaries yet are not of our Faith.

We thought that the new pastor might not understand ; but might think that idle curiosity alone had drawn the people to gape at us as we prayed. The old pastor, we knew, would have known at once that

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— as our neighbors — they simply wished shyly to show their own delight in the blessing that God had vouchsafed us. But then it had been the old pastor's great joy on evenings when his time was his own to read Hebrew with little Jacob Rubinovitch, whose tailoring shop is across the street, cater-corner, from the rectory ; or to play chess with Dr. Seth Adams, who spouted quotations from Robert Ingersoll and the Frenchman Voltaire at every opportunity, and who . . . we whispered it among ourselves . . . was supposed to be very nearly an Atheist, to say nothing of being away high up in the Masons. (Dr. Adams sent for the old pastor when he was dying, and received Baptism from him . . . but that is another story.)

Yet strangely enough the new pastor, for all he is a very retiring and studious man and seems to us to notice little of our daily parish concerns, did understand. He walked over to the fence at once and smilingly shook hands with Jake Rubinovitch, who stood there fingering his hat while the March wind played havoc with his thinning gray hair. It was characteristic of Jake that — for all his rigid orthodoxy — he removed his hat for our Christian prayers because he knew that that was our custom.

The new pastor shook hands, too, with the Reverend Mr. Jaffrey of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, who, passing, had also stopped and stood with bowed head when he had realized the occasion and meaning of our prayers. And Mr. Jaffrey shook his hand warmly, stepping aside only to let more and more of our non-Catholic friends press forward to greet Father joyously and add their words of pleased good will.

I thought as I viewed the faces of our own group within the churchyard and our neighbors outside that rarely had I seen happiness that was so universal. It shone in everyone's eyes.

I spoke of it afterwards to Mrs. Patrick Crowley, who is wise with the wisdom of age ; and who has in her long Catholic life seen and known much more of all things in general than falls to many people's lot. For over fifty years now as president of our Altar and Rosary Society she has been the leading force of the Old Parish in all matters not positively ecclesiastical ; and in those we sometimes feel that few Cardinals can outrank her in esoteric knowledge.

"It was very lovely," she said simply, "very lovely, very Christian, and very Catholic. All the word 'Catholic' means, you know, is 'universal.' We were

all Catholics together that morning, little as those others realized it. For they, themselves, gave testimony then to the universality of the universal Church, in which subconsciously their souls believe even if their hearts and minds have been trained to deny the truth.

"Here for years on end they have been singing *Rock of Ages* in their bare, barren meeting-houses ; and yet it is only now with the world in chaos that they are beginning to realize, if still very faintly, that the Rock is Peter and Peter is the Church. It is not I who say it . . . but the new pastor. I had a long talk with him about it ; and that is more or less how he explained it to me.

"You see, boy," she continued earnestly, "that they who are not of our Faith don't know . . . as we know . . . that the Church goes on always. When our late Holy Father died, you see, he took something away from them. They didn't understand the continuity of the Holy See. They had grown to look upon the Eleventh Pius as the only secure rock in an insecure world . . . the one, single, great force that was fighting to hold Christian civilization for the world. Among our own people there was great sorrow that Pius the Eleventh had

been taken from us, but we had no such feeling of panic as infested them. It was to Pius the Vicar of Christ on earth, you see, that we looked for support and guidance. They thought only of Pius, the man.

"That was why when I talked to them . . . and I don't think I ever met so many non-Catholics with long faces as in those days before the meeting of the Conclave . . . I found it so hard to make them understand that each link in the chain of Peter is equally strong, even if it is engraved in a slightly different way. They had not the gift of grace to be able to believe . . . what you and I know . . . that it is the Hand of God that forges each link, and joins it perfectly to the link before it.

"Now once again they have a feeling of safety; for they have the same confidence in the Twelfth Pius, the man, as they had in Pius, the man, who preceded him. They may not know as yet, since they see but through a glass in a dark manner, the absolute confidence that is ours in the continuity of the Vicar of Christ on earth. God pity them . . . as He surely does."

But although Mrs. Crowley gave eloquent voice to the pious pleasure that was in all our hearts, yet I must confess that a tiny bit of worldly satisfaction

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has been mixed with our spiritual joy. Truly and humbly devout as we do try to be in the Old Parish, we are still very human after all. In that we are not one whit better than our neighbors, who have not been given the grace of the Faith that is ours.

Yet I do not think anyone would blame us overly much for the slight raising of pride that the election of Pius the Twelfth as Supreme Pontiff and Servant of the Servants of God has given us. It is only because of this : that now so many of us may hold fast to our hearts what we never on earth believed could ever possibly come true, what . . . in matters purely worldly . . . I can safely say was everyone's secret heart's desire. Although we have never been to Rome . . . *yet have we seen the Pope !* And some of us have made reverent obeisance to him !

It is true that we have not seen His Holiness Pius the Twelfth gloriously reigning. It was His Eminence Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli whom we viewed respectfully when by train, bus, and automobile we journeyed to Boston at the time the Papal Secretary of State visited this country. Still, we *have* seen our present Holy Father ; and long ago we felt that we must put any such vainglorious hope out of our minds completely.

We were content that we had an especial link in the Old Parish to the Head of the Universal Church, in knowing and loving our own Pope's Johnny Sullivan, who as a Papal Zouave fought for the late and saintly Pio Nono when the brazen Garibaldis were storming the walls of Rome ; Johnny who was . . . we are quite sure of it . . . the very intimate, personal friend of the Ninth Pius.

Perhaps we did have twinges of envy when Constance Casey returned to the Old Parish after graduate study with the Mesdames in their convents in Paris and Rome. For Constance has heard the silver trumpets blowing, and seen the great feathered *flabella* waving, as Pius the Eleventh was borne into Saint Peter's on the *sedia gestatoria* during one of the great liturgical ceremonies ; and she was privileged to kneel for our Holy Father's blessing in audience at the Vatican.


But after all, Johnny Sullivan was a great hero, whom it was privilege enough in itself for us to be able to call friend ; and Constance Casey is tremendously educated, with a high college degree, whereas the most of the rest of us have had lots of hard work but little schooling, and no chance to mix with the great of the world. It would not be meet nor proper

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for the likes of us, we know, to even think of such a thing as seeing the Holy Father with our own eyes. Not surely as Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ ; Successor of Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles ; Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church ; Patriarch of the West ; Primate of Italy ; Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province ; Sovereign of Vatican City. For we are as conscious and appreciative of all his great dignities as we are of our own unworthiness.

No, we are quite content with the blessing that has been accorded us . . . a personal glimpse of the cardinal who was to become the Servant of the Servants of God. And as we have added to "the trimmings" of our nightly Rosary the prayer that to the Eleventh Pius the Lord may grant peace eternal, so we also humbly pray that He in His Goodness may make Pius the Twelfth His instrument in this troubled world for peace on earth to all men of good will.

CONCERNING
THE SAINTS

 IN THE Old Parish we have great devotion to the Saints. We are a prayerful but an humble people. In our humility we are anxious, even in our prayers, "to have the other fellow put in a good word for us." For we find it difficult, even in things of the spirit, to be bold enough to put forward that good word for ourselves.

We are individual, all of us, and in many cases our special traits of personality are strongly marked. So we by no means agree, as a parish entity, in the veneration of any particular members of the Communion of Saints. Where Mary Ellen Shea, for example, may have great faith in the Little Flower, her brother Dinnie thinks that there is no one like Saint Anthony. And so it goes.

I need hardly mention, however, that there is the one Saint above all others to whom the whole Old Parish has universal recourse at all times. We look

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upon the gentle and good Saint Mary as the Blessed Mother of us all. We rightly know that there is nothing that we may not ask Our Lady and be sure of getting . . . provided it is good for us. And we know that she is the best judge of that.

And next to Our Lady there is a very strong feeling in the Old Parish, among the men particularly, that Saint Patrick is a very powerful man to have on your side if it is something you are after. The Pope's Johnny Sullivan in his day used to tell with great impressiveness the story of the sojourn of Saint Patrick on the mountain top ; and the three promises that his prayers and fasting won from Almighty God. It is the last promise that holds out great hope to us. You, of course, know well what that one was : that Saint Patrick, because he alone understood the Irish, would have the judging of them on the Last Day. That is a very comforting thought to have, the old men feel, and Saint Patrick not the man to be ignored in your night and morning prayers.

Yet, although our parish background is Irish, we are by no means insular in our choice of patrons. As members of the Church Universal we recognize the universality of sainthood. Truth to tell, some of us were a little bit slow about getting around to Saint

Thomas More when the new pastor dedicated the school library in his name. Dinnie Shea was all for him . . . under the firm assumption that Saint Thomas had written *The Minstrel Boy* and *Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*. That led to quite a controversy among the men in Paradise Alley, their little gathering place by Holy Name hall. Dan Pat Kelly was sure that he had read somewhere that the man had been Lord Chancellor of England. The two things did not quite seem to jibe. However, Larry O'Toole found the name spelled "Moore" in an old book, so we all decided that his father or his father's father before him had been an Irish exile, and that made it all right. Saint Thomas is mentioned quite often, of an odd time, in our supplications . . . now we know he has "the good drop" in him.

Larry O'Toole, needless to say, has his own very particular patron, a saint of his own name and family no less, Saint Lawrence O'Toole, who was Archbishop of Dublin away back before Cromwell. If you grant the premise . . . and in the Old Parish we all do . . . that there is nothing luckier than having a priest in the family, you can well imagine that . . . having a Saint in his . . . there is very

little Larry turns his hand to that does not prosper.

We all for that matter have great predilection for the Saints whose names we bear, even though Larry is the only one in the parish who has the good of a family name as well as that he received at the christening. And the most of us, too, do have the added good will toward us of the Saints whose names we chose in Confirmation. Few of us ever went far afield in the *Lives of the Saints* to make our Confirmation choice. Boys are the most conventional of humans and it was rather generally agreed among us that Saint Joseph was as august and sincere a patron as we could wish. The girls, however, with the chance of a name or names of their own choosing, for weeks before the coming of the Bishop "tried on" name after name. The fancier the combination of consonants and vowels, the more popular the choice. Had the girls had their own way, the Old Parish long ere this would have been filled with Josefitas, Ethelburtas, Angelicas and Dorotheas. At the last minute, however, Reverend Mother at the convent and the no less revered mother in each family invariably had their quiet word to say; and the prospective Gloria Shirley — when the time came — meekly handed over the altar rail a card denoting a choice of

Mary, Ann or Elizabeth . . . and the name of Reverend Mother's own patron.

Saint Ann, mother of the Virgin, has a great following in the Old Parish, as has Saint Bernadette Soubirous and Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. They are the great Novena saints ; but their aid is also just as often called upon when no novenas are in progress.

The Saints I have mentioned are those whose powers and protective intercession are revered by us all. But the more individualistic among us have other less well known sanctities upon whom we call for prayerful assistance.

The Pope's Johnny Sullivan, for example, as a man who had personally known a Supreme Pontiff, concentrated most of his pleas for intercession at the feet of those holy ones who had in their lifetime occupied the bishopric of Rome. It was to Saint Peter that Johnny's petitions went up and to Saint Linus and Saint Cletus. Saint Gregory was another by whom John Sullivan set great store ; and Saint Pius, of course, although in the Pope's Johnny's heart there was always a longing that some day he might be able to pray to the Ninth Pius, who had called him friend.

Mary Ellen Shea, Dinnie the Bow's sister, on the other hand, varies her list of patrons month by

month and year by year. Mary Ellen is the softest-hearted of women ; and she is, herself, so often ignored by stronger personalities that it has made her very considerate of the feelings of others. Mary, for that reason, has the habit now of going through the *Book of Saints*, and picking out the names of those of whom she has never heard . . . nor anyone else, for that matter. It is her idea that the feelings of the Saints may be hurt by neglect just as well as those of mortal men. She doesn't think it's fair, at all. So she is always digging up someone like Saint Phocas the Gardener, Saint Samson the Hospitable, Saint Adalbold D'Ostrevant or Saint Moses the Black. And as a maiden lady whose chances are past but whose heart is good, she has long had great veneration for Saint Aemiliana, who, she read, was the aunt of Gregory the Great.

It is Mary's hope and prayer to call upon, in a friendly way, the services of each and every Saint in the calendar as often as she can while she lives. It is a great boon to her when it so happens that she feels that she can remember more than one Saint at a time in her devotions . . . as in the case of The Forty Martyrs and The Fourteen Holy Helpers, The

Seven Holy Founders and Saint Ursula and all her Virgins.

But, individual as might be the Pope's Johnny Sullivan and timid Mary Shea, I need not tell you that the most rugged individualist in the whole of the Old Parish is our own Mrs. Patrick Crowley. Indeed, it seems strange to have come so far along in this account of the Old Parish without once mentioning her.

Mary Ellen Shea is pious . . . of that there is no question . . . but she is negatively so. Not Mrs. Patrick Crowley! She is *positively* pious. And why not? President of the Altar and Rosary Society for well over the last forty years, superintendent of the Sunday School before the Sisters came, and arbiter and mentor of the Old Parish since time almost immemorial!

Yet . . . I whisper it . . . there are a bold few in the Old Parish who feel that Mrs. Patrick Crowley has her flaws. They claim for one thing that she is very chauvinistic, very narrow, in some of her views. There are a lot of us who skip down to the French for Confession, or down to the Poles for Church if we feel that the Book has been changed at the Mass

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we were going to in our own. Not . . . definitely not . . . Mrs. Patrick Crowley. The Commandments of the Church are as strictly held by her as the Ten Commandments. She worships only in her own parish church and contributes of her means to the support of her own ordained pastor. She is in her pew for the High each Sunday long before the *Asperges*, just as surely as she is the first one up from her seat for the *Domine non sum dignus* at the Seven each Sunday.

I suppose it is the way we all should be ; but we have not quite her spirit. And still and all, despite her closeness to devotional perfection, some of us have felt for a long time that she could be a little more complacent about our praying to the Saints. After all, we have not her great authority. Compared to her, we admit we are very plain people, who may only do the best we can. It is all very well for the likes of her to take a high stand ; but we do not presume to put ourselves in her class.

For, truth to tell, Mrs. Patrick Crowley does *not* pray to the Saints ! She does *not* ! And when the question was put to her pointblank one time by a rasher man than I would care to be, she gave answer thus : “And why should I, pray tell ? If I go into

a man's office looking for a favor . . . it doesn't matter whether it is for the Catholic Charities' Drive or whatever it is I am after . . . I certainly never do business with a stenographer or secretary or one of those snips they call receptionists. I do not ! I see the head man or no one at all . . . and I let no one stop me from seeing him.

"So when I have an appeal to make to Almighty God, I look for no intercessors. I go right to headquarters. I make my plea to the Sacred Heart directly. And God hears me."

The matter would almost assume the proportions of a scandal in the Old Parish if we did not know that Mrs. Crowley, in her great and true Americanism, has latterly very quietly contributed out of her slender means to the causes of the North American Martyrs, to Blessed Mother Cabrini, to Catherine Tekakwitha, Mother Alphonsa and Mother Seton.

However, there was no one in the Old Parish more surprised than I when I met Mrs. Crowley the other day, and asked, idly, if she had been over to the convent for Compline.

"I have not," she said with all emphasis, "I have been down to Our Lady of Krakow Church and I have been saying my prayers to Saint Stanislaus and

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Saint Casimir, to Saint Stanislaus Kostka and Saint Hyacinth and to Saint Clement Mary Hofbauer.

"Yes," she said, "and I have been down to the little Ukrainian church in the Circus Meadows and said my prayers to Saint Vladimir and Saint Josaphat and Saints Cyril and Methodius ; and to Saint Olga who came from Scandinavia and was Saint Vladimir's grandmother. The real Russians, I've been praying to. Yes, and to Saint Nicholas, too.

"And in our own church I've been lighting candles and sending up prayers to Saint Bridget of Sweden and Saint Canute of Denmark and Saint Olaf of Norway ; and to Saint Eric and Saint Hallward and Saint Sigrid. I prayed to them all, as being near to the Finns. And most of all to Saint Brendan. I'm sure it was the men he took over in his boat that settled that country. Just look at the name. If the Finns don't stem from Finn McCool, who does ?"

"Oh, I'm sure they do," I said hastily. Mrs. Crowley is not one with whom to argue. "And another thing or two . . . the Patron of Finland is a Saint Henry. . . . And more, had you by any chance thought of Saint Finnbarr ?"

"A-a-ah, I knew they were right people and of our own," she trumpeted loudly. "Saint Finnbarr, of

course, patron of Rebel Cork. I'll have the whole parish praying to Finnbarr before night falls. And may Cromwell who failed in the same course talk it over with Stalin and Hitler when they all three meet down below. I knew 'the good drop' was in those Finns the sturdy way they fought. God and Saint Finnbarr was with them."

"Amen," said I.

"And now, next off, who was the Irishman converted the Poles?" she asked me eagerly then.

"They hold faith in Our Lady," I said.

Mrs. Patrick Crowley looked at me intently. Then, with a nod of her veiled head she said in all seriousness, "As do the French and the Belgians and the Catholic Dutch. They'll all make out then, never fear. And I need look up no more Irish missionary Saints. For Our Lady is worth a million Irishmen."

Now that was a notable concession . . . but it is true. As an Irishman I reaffirm it, God forgive me.

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CONCERNING

LENT



OMING home from the Nine last Sunday, I met Tim Sullivan, Katie's husband, coming along with Mrs. Patrick Crowley. Tim hailed me heartily as they came abreast of me.

"Well now, young fellow, what are you giving up for Lent? I was just saying to Aunt Abbie here that I'm keeping my own fast pretty well. Not a piece of chocolate candy has passed my lips since Shrove Tuesday."

"Listen to the likes of him," said Mrs. Crowley drily. Tim, who is the Pope's Johnny's boy, is her godchild. "That would be a great sacrifice — the like of you giving up candy! I'll bet you never touch it, except maybe to take a piece out of the children's stockings at Christmas when they were little . . . just to please them."

She turned to me. "But isn't that the way it goes

nowadays ? They're all eager and willing to fast during Lent on things they'd have no use for at any other time of the year. They call that keeping Lent ! Well, if they do ; I don't. It wasn't the way I was brought up ; nor you either, Tim, for that matter. That's not the sort of talk you'd ever have dared to hand out to your father, God rest him."

"Aunt Abbie, you're old-fashioned," roared Tim. "I declare I don't know what I can do with you. Nobody keeps Lent now, except the Sisters and a few old fogies. Didn't you hear the new pastor read the dispensations ? There's not a man, woman nor child in the parish but couldn't get under the line somewhere, and enjoy the good of three square meals a day."

"I didn't bother to listen to any dispensations," Mrs. Crowley tossed her head. "Why should I ? I've kept Lent right, these sixty or seventy odd years ; and no harm. I'd look nice now at my age seeing how close to the mark I could run, how much I could get out of doing without disturbing my conscience. A little fasting and a few mortifications never hurt anybody."

"Still," I said, "you know, Mrs. Crowley, there are those that shouldn't fast . . . the sick, and men

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who work hard and have to keep their strength up, the old and feeble. . . .”

“If you mean me, I’m not one of them ! Old I may be, but I am certainly not feeble. The sick I’ll grant you, and any man whose job calls for real, actual, hard labor. It’s not them I’m talking about, nor is it only the fasting. I, for one, would feel great shame if I stooped to take advantage of the dispensations, and didn’t make it up to God some other way, morning Mass or the Stations every day or an extra Rosary.

“But the ones I’m thinking about will do neither. Come day, go day, God save Sunday !” she dismissed them with honest contempt.

It has been several years since I have spent Lent in the Old Parish ; and this year again I expect to be called away. So I shall have little opportunity to see for myself if there is any truth in Tim Sullivan’s statement that the parish is no longer keeping the holy season as we used to in the days of the old pastor.

Lent in those days was one of the very important periods of the year ; second only, I do believe, to Christmas in the expectation, the planning and the valorous effort to see that the plans we had made came to fulfillment.

In the Old Parish, Lent was to us a seven weeks' retreat made by everyone, individually and voluntarily, with Our Lord, Himself, as the retreat master. The Wednesday night devotions with the special Lenten sermon were always crowded, with extra seats in the aisles and up on the altar. It was the same with the Way of the Cross on Friday evenings ; and on Sunday night at Holy Hour services. You had to be at church early for Confession each Saturday ; and yet no matter how early you were, you always found a long line ahead of you, moving slowly along from pew to pew until it came your turn at the "box" ; and on Sunday at the earlier Masses there would be . . . often . . . two extra priests just to give out Holy Communion.

But all that we took as a simple matter of course. Attendance at Lenten devotions was in the same category as going to Mass on Sunday or saying your morning and night prayers. We would have thought little enough of ourselves, or of each other, if we had stopped there. That would not have meant any decently proper observance of Lent at all.

It was in our personal and private devotions that the men and women of the Old Parish were drawn together. Oh, yes . . . the men no less than the

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women. The same sturdy faces that you might see at Cassidy's, passing the time of day with each other over the one friendly glass before supper, you would in the weeks of Lent find taking those fifteen minutes to visit the church, to say the Stations in the soft dark, or finger their horn beads in the Rosary.

At morning Mass it was the same way, rain or shine, snow or sleet. We were as regular as clock-work or the postman on his beat. The women would be there each morning at the Half Past Six or the Seven, of course, in full force . . . from Mrs. Patrick Crowley in her cape and black veils to Kay Feeney, who ran the dancing academy and wore pert French hats. But there in church also you would find Jerry Driscoll, the fire captain, on his way to report for duty, and Dan Sullivan, the policeman just off his beat after an all night patrol. Peter Flynn, the letter-carrier, was as faithful in his morning attendance as in seeing that the mails came through ; there would be Johnnie Riordan, who kept the grocery store and Mike Casey, the butcher ; Ned Meehan and Dinnie the Bow Shea ; and the Kelly boys and Tommie Devine on their way to high school. I could not mention the half of them.

It may sound rather dull and sanctimonious in the

telling ; and when I add that we *did* give up our glass of beer, our candy, our movies and our friendly game of whist or Forty-Fives . . . and thought nothing of it . . . it might seem, indeed, that all we needed to round out existence were a few witches to torture, stocks and a scold-stool.

Yet the odd part about it is that it was all a lot of fun. Lent in the Old Parish then was the pleasantest and most cheery of times. We greeted each other daily with the same warm good humor that everyone everywhere has for his neighbor on Christmas Day. There was kinship among us. If you met the dowager Mrs. Patrick Crowley on the street, although you knew her but slightly, you recognized in the quick smile that accompanied her stately bow the unspoken message : "I saw you 'receiving' at the Seven this morning" or : "I know very well where you're headed. I've myself just come from there. I said my Stations early today."

We knew as we sat down to supper on Shrove Tuesday before steaming piles of brown and gold pancakes that there were like piles gracing every supper table in the parish. Pancake Tuesday it was to us always, where elsewhere they speak of *Mardi Gras*. As we passed on the street or met at work or at the

grocer's next day, we looked, with smiling recognition, for the mark of the ashes that identified us all as children of the same family.

To have the children of the Old Parish all fasting on candy for seven long weeks may well have halved the precarious income of old Kate O'Neil who kept the little penny shop near the school ; but to see her bobbing along smiling to morning Mass or to Benediction at the convent you would think, each year in turn, that someone had died and left her a mint of money. And who in the Old Parish I would like to know gave a second thought to Pearl White or Bessie Barriscale or the Sisters Gish, when for weeks the girls in the Holy Angels Sodality had been drilling, the junior and senior choirs had been practising the old songs, and the Mary Anderson Dramatic Club had been rehearsing *The Shaughraun*, getting ready for that triumph of all the muses, the annual Saint Patrick's Night Show.

Lent in those days sped by so quickly. Why, before you knew it, it was Palm Sunday and the long Gospel of the Passion that it was a point of honor for us as children to stand through — without moving our feet or shifting our weight from one leg to the other. In the afternoon, if the weather was mild

and we went walking we greeted each other with little crosses of palm in our hatbands or pinned to our coats . . . from the fronds we had received at Mass that morning. We knew that in every Old Parish household our mothers and wives would be hanging, over the bedsteads or the Holy Father's Blessing, the elaborately braided palm strands on which their deft, artistic fingers had been working since the dinner dishes had been washed and put away. And if we passed a group of very serious little girls walking backward with great dignity we knew it was no childish fad of the hour. We recognized at once that they had been honored above their fellows by being chosen as "strewers" for the procession on Holy Thursday, and were merely practising their art.

Few of us missed the splendor of the Mass and the procession in honor of the establishment of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday. Maundy Thursday, we always called it in the Old Parish, so far do our atavistic Catholic links go back into a past when there *was* the washing of the feet on the Thursday before Easter. It is a grand thing to be old, old Catholics. It surprises and delights me so every now and then to find in the Old Parish a forgotten, yet still remembered, link like that with the Apostles.

As regards the solemn Mass, those of us who could not stay for its fulfillment remained in the church as long as we could, waiting over from our own earlier Mass. How we beamed and how proud we were to see our children . . . or even the neighbors' children, all friends of ours . . . marching along : the boys in their First Communion suits with Buster Brown collars and big white bows, the little girls visions of ethereal beauty in filmy white dresses, and even filmier white veils crowned by wreaths of smilax. And if there was a "strewer" in the family, walking backward and distributing with prim precision rosebuds before the oncoming King of Kings, then our cup of spiritual joy nearly ran over. And to the elders of the men of the Old Parish, no worldly honor will ever be so great as that of carrying the canopy over the old pastor as he made his holy way along, weighted down by his golden cope, carrying in his anointed old hands the Blessed Sacrament ! Pooh to Knights of Saint Gregory and Private Chamberlains of the Sword and Cape ! In our eyes there was no honor like unto that honor of bearing above the Lord the canopy that was His due. There could not be in this world.

Holy Thursday evening was the evening in which

we wandered far afield. It was a custom from time immemorial in the Old Parish to visit, if we could, seven churches on Holy Thursday to pray in each one before the Blessed Sacrament. Never to my knowledge was any indulgence or blessing attached to the pilgrimage ; it was merely a pious custom from the old time.

It meant a good trudge for us in the Old Parish, for our parish boundaries are large in themselves and the other churches in the diocese almost miles away ; but we did it, and merrily, too.

“How many have you been to ?” a voice would be sure to sing out to us as we mounted the steps of Saint Leo’s to the south of us, or the Immaculate to the north. It would be a cheery hail from Bernadette O’Toole or Tim Sullivan’s wife, Katie, or from Mrs. Patrick Crowley and Maria Killoran, on the same errand as our own, save that now they were headed for the Portuguese Church of *Ecce Homo* or the Maronite Chapel of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon.

It was not often, sadly, that our work permitted our presence at the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday or at the *Tre Ore* service or “Three Hours’ Agony,” as we call it in the parish, at the

Cathedral from twelve until three on Good Friday afternoon ; but our wives, our mothers and our sisters went to them both. They could talk of nothing else over the hot-cross buns at suppertime but the eloquence of Father Vincent Ferrer, the great Dominican preacher, in his sermons on the Seven Last Words.

But if our work made it impossible for us to be at the late Mass or at the *Tre Ore* services at the Cathedral, it did not prevent us, the lot of us, from keeping the three hours' silence, speaking no word from twelve noon until three, the time in which, according to our staunch Irish tradition, Our Saviour suffered and died on the cross for our sins.

The girls in the clothroom of the Millington mills kept the silence as did the women tending their eight looms in the weave sheds. And if an English overseer or second hand asked a surly question, he was the more surprised to be met with dignified silence rather than with a pert American answer. I can remember being called upon in public school . . . in the years I was *not* in Helen Leary's or Maybelle Manning's or Agnes Downs' rooms . . . and shaking my head dumbly until someone piped up, "He's a Cat'lic. They ain't talkin'." I know Bartholomew

Grady, the policeman whose tour of duty was the Old Parish, used to say a special rosary before the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday that no fire, flood nor confused stranger asking foolish directions break into his deep desire to keep the three hours' Good Friday silence.

We knelt together . . . we of the Old Parish . . . on that sad Friday night, the doleful cadences of the *Stabat Mater* in our ears and hearts, to venerate the Cross ; or we made our way to the crowded Cathedral to hear the chant of the *Tenebrae*, the most awesome of all the services of the Church.

The next day, Holy Saturday, when we came from work at noon we knelt again, as we had kneeled before the Cross the night before, and blessed ourselves as our mother sprinkled over us the Easter water that she had earlier brought from Mass and with which she had already blessed the house.

That meant Lent was over. We felt sad, not glad. We turned up our noses at the candy we had been seven weeks without ; we picked up our pipes and laid them down again, unfilled ; we passed Cassidy's tavern on our way home, totally unmindful.

It seemed much more to the point to go . . . as we did . . . to Confession Saturday night for our

Easter Communion ; and to rise early for early Mass on Easter Day, to see . . . as our mothers had since babyhood told us . . . the sun dance in the heavens as it does always on that morning, in honor of the Resurrection. And for breakfast after Mass — for once in the year we could have all the eggs we could ask for. Privately, I could never go more than three, which always seemed to make me out a bad Catholic. I have known those who ordered six or seven ; and from their mothers on Easter Day there was no denying.

I don't know ; perhaps the Old Parish has not changed so much. I am sure it has not. Just a few minutes ago Bernadette O'Toole telephoned to say that Constance Casey is giving up her contract bridge parties until Lent is over. She is a good Catholic, is Constance. From now until Easter, *auction* is the only bridge her crowd will play. What a pity for Manus Scanlon, with his two sons in Maryknoll and a daughter with the Carmelites, that there is only the one, unholy way of playing cribbage or Forty-Fives !

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CONCERNING
RELIGIOUS HATRED



SO TEMPESTUOUSLY did Mrs. Patrick Crowley come down Saint Mary's Street that her cape and her widow's veil flew out furiously behind her. There was that in her eyes and in the tight set of her mouth, I saw as she neared me, that boded no good, whatsoever at all, for someone or something.

Her lined old face was working with anger as she came abreast of me. It was just where the statue of Our Lady stands in the churchyard, blessing the street and all who pass by.

Our statue of Saint Mary, after whom the street and the Old Parish church are named, is not the customary reproduction of the Virgin as she appeared to Saint Bernadette at Lourdes. Rather is it of a younger, girlish Mary. It is of Our Lady of the Annunciation. It was she to whom old Father Sullivan, Millington's first resident pastor, dedicated the church and the Old Parish many, many long

years ago. That was when our present simple but sturdy, and therefore beautiful, Gothic church replaced the little wooden chapel — with its lean-to sacristy that served also as rectory — which was Millington's first Catholic church ; and our parish was more than county wide.

Well over a hundred years ago when the chapel was builded, anti-Catholicism was strong in New England ; and our Catholic people were few and scattered. But in time the tiny chapel congregation, gathered on Sundays from long hard miles around, grew and grew. The Great Starvation in Ireland brought loyal Irish sons and daughters to our little chapel ; and the cry of "No Popery" vanished from Millington at the eager answer our Catholic Irishmen gave to Father Abraham's call for volunteers.

It was just before the War that old Father Sullivan began his plans for a new and worthy church. In my own time, indeed, there have been living men who recalled proudly how they had given their time and their strength to what was known as "God's night labor." The men of the Old Parish then — as now — were humble men, working men. Their day's stint then, however, took their time from before

dawn until after the setting of the sun. But at old Father Sullivan's word — for God's holy house — these tired, backbroken men went out each night under the light of flaring torches to dig the foundations for the building that is our Old Parish church today. It was that zeal, so humble and so honest in the service of the Faith they owned, that did more than any single thing to earn respect for themselves and their religion from their Yankee employers. That and their instant answer to Mr. Lincoln's call.

Old Father Sullivan was a hard, bluff old man ; without sentiment at all. Or so you might have thought. But Father Sullivan was Irish ; and it is not strange that he dedicated his new granite church to the Mary of the Annunciation. "I am no Gabriel," he said testily but with wry humor. "God knows . . . and so do you, to your cost . . . that there's little of the angel about me. But ye have made it possible for me to announce to all the world that despised and contemned as we may have been — we, the Catholics of Millington, are second to none as true Americans."

Our own old pastor erected the statue as a memorial to Father Sullivan who is buried in our churchyard. The old pastor loved the statue. "The Lily

of Israel" he used to call it affectionately to the children who always swarmed about him as he crossed the yard from the school to the rectory. It is as "The Lily of Israel" we know the statue now, tenderly, in the parish.

I do not think that Mrs. Crowley . . . in her headlong passage . . . would have noticed me had she not drawn up unconsciously before the statue to make the little genuflecting gesture our women give to the statue of Our Lady and to the grave of Father Sullivan beneath it. We men of the Old Parish, with equal reverence, lift our hats as we pass by.

Mrs. Crowley recognized me almost with a gasp ; but her face softened as she saw who it was. I was happy, indeed, to realize that her rage, whatever its cause, did not include me in its boundaries.

"Oh ! 'Tis you !" she exclaimed. "And a sight for sore eyes *you* are ! Don't get any nonsense into your head now. I'm not given to flattery . . . but . . . but *well* !

"*Well* ! I tell you I have never been forced to listen to such nonsense in all my born days. Why ! . . . the *nerve* of the man to try to tell me . . . *me* . . . what was what and who was who. That . . . that Epaminondas ! I declare I don't know when I've

ever been so wrought up before. O-oh ! So brazen, so boldfaced ! Lord knows I was never one to lack the use of my tongue ; but I declare I didn't hardly dare to answer him . . . he had me so provoked. But answer him I did, and strongly, too. I told *him* a thing or two, and it was more than two. But I finally had to stalk off and leave him, lest I lose my temper, and tomorrow the First Friday."

"What on earth is the matter ?" I asked very cautiously. "Surely nothing important enough to get you so worked up. At your age. . . ."

"At *my* age ! Well, then let me tell you, young man, there is one thing I still have at my age, and that's the sense I was born with. If I've gained nothing since, I still at least have that. And at my age, as you call it, I haven't forgotten what I learned in Holy Catechism when I was a girl. And if you think I'm one that starts over on their beads or goes daydreaming when the sermon is on, then you have another think coming. I know the Gospels well . . . which is more than I can say about some people. If they listened at all . . . even on an odd Sunday . . . then the lessons they taught went in one stupid ear and right out the other."

"But you still aren't telling me what it is all

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about," I ventured again as she paused for a quick intake of breath.

"Hmnh ! Then I'll tell you," she began at once, "and indeed I will . . . if you'll only let me get a word in edgewise. I'll tell you !

"What is it all about ? This is what it is all about. That Smith fellow . . . you know the one I mean . . . the one that never did a tap of honest work until he got on the W.P.A. . . . and even there I think he's a great help to the Republicans . . . he's what it's all about.

"Not ten minutes ago, as I was coming out of church at peace with myself and with the world, he stopped me on the street and shoved a handbill under my nose without so much as a 'by your leave.' 'Take this,' he says, as bold as brass and twice as impudent, 'take this. And see that you study it up and be down there at the hall at half past seven Wednesday night. Don't neglect your duty !'

"Well . . . let alone the fact that I haven't missed a midweek Lenten service on Wednesday night in over fifty years, and don't intend to . . . why should the like of him be telling me . . . *me* . . . my duty ? Well !

"No matter. To make a long story short I took

his little paper and pulled up my glasses on the chain to have a look at the thing anyway if just for curiosity's sake. What killed the cat has no power to kill me or I'd be dead long ago.

"‘LEARN TRUE AMERICANISM,’ it read, ‘COME TO THE MONSTER MASS MEETING WEDNESDAY NIGHT IN MECHANICS’ HALL. NOTED SPEAKERS. LEARN HOW TO SAVE AMERICA.’

"I had got just that far when this Smith broke in again, ‘You people have been living like ostriches too long,’ he says, through a cloud of cigarette smoke, puffing it all over me. ‘But we’ll give you the facts. That’s our motto, *Save America.*’

"‘From what?’ said I, for the sake of a ready answer, being none too pleased at being likened to an ostrich, which may be a very worthy bird but none whose name I ever heard used in complimentary terms. And by the same token, thinking all the while that himself was a poor sort of specimen to depend upon to save anything. If he was too young itself for the last Draft, thought I, ‘tis few tears he’d shed to be over age for this one.

"Then my eye lit on some print at the bottom of the handbill. ‘*Buy Christian,*’ it read, ‘*and Save America.*’

"When I saw that . . . and he caught me looking . . . I gave him a look that would have caused an honest man to wither. But did it wither him? It did not, at all.

" 'It's the Jews,' he said very slyly, puffing his little cigarette. 'From now on *Buy Christian* and we'll destroy 'em.'

"Well, I'm usually pretty quick at the uptake; but it took a full minute for that to sink in; and still I wasn't sure I had heard right.

" 'What,' said I, 'you mean that I shouldn't patronize Jake Rubinovitch, the tailor, nor Yolkmann's Market?'

" 'That's right, sister' . . . *sister to me!* — he said, 'boycott 'em all. Sure thing. Drive 'em out of business. Save America.'

" 'Let you save your breath to cool your porridge,' I told him then straightforwardly. 'For if America is to be saved by my taking the bread out of the mouth of a decent, clean-living man like Jake Rubinovitch by whom the old pastor set great store, then it's not my America, and it's not worth saving.' "

She turned to me after a quiet moment. "Why," she said with a deep sincerity that had its share of be-

wilderment, "why . . . the old pastor and Jake used to read Hebrew nights by the hour together . . . and Jacob rightly considers me his friend. It makes me . . . fill up . . . to think that I should be even asked to hurt a friend . . . my friend, and the friend of the dear old pastor.

"But did what I had to say faze that whippersnapper. It did not. 'Stick by the Irish,' he leered at me point-blank. 'The Jews are out to do the Irish in. The boycott is the only thing.'

"I tried to be very calm. 'But if I boycott Yolkmann's Market,' I said to him, holding myself in, 'if I do that, the man will lose business and have to lay people off. And who has he working for him? . . . Peter Duffy at the meat counter, John O'Flaherty in the vegetables, and Molly Ryan and Mary Elizabeth Furey in the cashiers' cage.' And those are names with only one heritage . . . our own.

"Well, of course he had no answer for that, nor could he have. For while I can't speak for anywhere else, I can speak for the Old Parish; and here at least that's the way it is. The Irish may be very slow about hiring Jews; but the Jews . . . I'll say that for them . . . have always been quick to em-

ploy a good man or a good woman no matter who nor what they were. And our own in richest measure.

“Well then this Smith . . . with my saying that . . . began to pull these leaflets out of his pocket and shoving them at me. *The Protocols of Zion*, one of them was headed. And the other in black print read : *Benjamin Franklin Warns America of the Jews*. Just imagine the man pulling those things on me . . . when every Catholic paper and magazine I subscribe to, and I subscribe to a good many, has come out flatfooted in the past year denouncing them both as arrant forgeries.

“Still, I took hold of them, and tucked them away in my bag here. I’m going to take them over to the new pastor. He’ll be very interested, I’ve no doubt, to know what’s going on around about him . . . for you know the most stirring sermon I think he has ever preached was that one on our late blessed Holy Father’s condemnation of excessive racialism.

“ ‘We Catholics must stick together’ were the last words out of this fellow’s mouth before I sailed in to him, and more than gave him a good stout piece of my mind. We Catholics ! . . . when I knew very well that if I up and asked the rapparee the last time

he made his Easter duty, he'd be hard put to it to tell me. *We Catholics, indeed!*"

"What did you say to him?" I broke in eagerly, for I must confess I was heart and soul in sympathy with Mrs. Crowley in her indignation.

"First off," she began, and with great dignity, "I quoted to him from the Sermon on the Mount and made particular point of Our Lord's emphasis on love of neighbor. And I quoted to him, too, from our dear late Holy Father.

"I told him that no one could question my Americanism ; and that it needed no saving. My father and my husband fought for their country to save the Union, and I gave my boy, Dermot, in the War with Spain. I didn't stress that . . . that's my affair, and a thing that the likes of him would little appreciate or understand. But I did stress this : that what he and those behind him were doing was nothing more nor less than reviving the only blemishes on the fair name of our country, the Know-Nothing movement of the 'fifties, the A.P.A.'s of a later date, and the Klu Klux Klan of our own modern time.

"It was against us Catholics the bigotry and hatred was then . . . the Jews were not of sufficient numbers in this country to make them cause for attack.

But the groundwork was the same then as it is today, Catholic or Jew. Many's the time I have heard my father tell that it was the foolish fear that the Irish . . . fleeing the desolation of the Starvation Years in great numbers . . . would take away earlier comers' jobs that gave the Know-Nothing party its chance to rise to power. Today, that very same identical fear is being drummed up because exiles from other parts of Europe are seeking haven here. Exiles or refugees, it's the same thing and holds the same meaning . . . although 'Irish exile' has, in the years, grown to have a respectable and romantic sound . . . and 'Jewish refugee' hasn't . . . yet.

"My father was himself in Boston the night the so-called Native Americans burned the Ursuline convent in Charlestown ; and he had friends and kinfolk who had had to barricade their houses for three days the year before in that same town against the onslaughts of an anti-Catholic mob. When the Know-Nothing movement rose to its greatest power, he lost his good job because he was a hated Catholic. My mother had to pinch and scrape desperately for months to keep not only them alive, but myself who was on the way.

"Here in Millington, more by the same token, I

myself have heard old Father Sullivan recall the doings on Pope's Day in November when the ruffians of the town would burn an effigy of the Holy Father in front of our chapel, while the night watch stood idly by, in full sympathy. *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* and these *Protocols of Zion* come from one and the same source . . . and that source the Father of Lies.

"I'd like to see the *Jehovah's Witness* that got far inside the door of Jake Rubinovitch's shop or his flat either with their scurrilous graphophone records or their anti-Catholic pamphlets. He'd fire them out quicker than I would myself. Now I'd look nice, wouldn't I, going in for anti-Semitism and taking my little trade away from a man like that who is truly my friend ?

"I didn't waste mention of that on this Smith fellow ; but I told him plenty. I minced no words, let me tell you, and I made my meaning clear.

"I can't remember the half now of what I did tell him, but what I have said now will serve to give you some idea. But I made this especially plain, and impressed it upon his mind for all I was worth : that what he was sponsoring I considered an insult to my Faith ; an insult to the memory of my own perse-

cuted ancestors in holy Ireland ; and an insult to the principles of liberty and equality for all peoples upon which this, my country, was founded. That's what I told him !”

“God save you, Mrs. Crowley,” I said. I lifted my hat and said it reverently, as we walked away from the gentle figure of *The Lily of Israel*.

CONCERNING

HER DAY



RS. PATRICK CROWLEY was in an urbane mood, as pleasant as ever I saw her. She had invited me to tea ; and I was flattered to be the single guest.

It was a grand tea, a very high tea as teas go. I am not much on that sort of thing, but even I could recognize that the richly thick damask cloth and napkins were the finest of Irish linen and that the teapot and the fragile cups and saucers were old Belleek.

Man-like I was more interested in the food. I wish I could truly tell you about it ; all I can say is that when Mrs. Crowley does a thing . . . she does it brown. There were wafer-thin slices of ham, and the most delicious of chicken salads arranged in just-so mounds on crisp leaves of lettuce. She swore up and down that it was canned tuna fish . . . but you can't fool me ; and it wasn't thick with chopped-up celery, either. There were frail china

plates piled high with her famous graham gems, and heavily frosted slices of fruitcake. There was a milkglass plate, too, of the most delicious biscuit . . . sort of a tea biscuit raised to the Nth degree. I asked her about them. She bridled and laughed aloud.

“Do you know what I call them, to myself ? . . . White Horse biscuit. Pat and I were newly married and taking a vacation at White Horse Beach, near Plymouth. He went out fishing, and I thought I’d surprise him with hot biscuits when he got back. I was green at the game, careful as I tried to be, and I left out something and put in something, that for the kind of biscuit I wanted I shouldn’t have. I was mortified and almost heartbroken when I tasted one, myself ; they weren’t at all what I had set out to make.

“And yet do you know when I put them on the table, Pat nearly finished the platter. He said he had never tasted such wonderful biscuit in his life. He meant it, too, the dear man. He did. So I had to break down and tell him that they were a mistake. He wouldn’t hear of it. He said he’d have those biscuit or no other whenever I put the like before him. Oh, he did really like them.

"I very rarely make them now," said Mrs. Crowley wistfully, "but there's many a batch of them I made in my day."

"Well, from the taste of these your day is still going on, Mrs. Crowley," I said to her in a voice rather muffled by the last quick bite I had taken. "Mm-mm ! Scrumptious !"

"Ah, lad," she said, "my day is nearly over. I've had my day. My day is gone. Yes, for all you say . . . and you're a nice boy to say it . . . it looks as though my day was done . . . mine and a whole lot like me.

"I hope and pray that it's not altogether gone. I do . . . every time I say my prayers. But I don't know ; I don't know. I pick up the paper of an evening, and all I see in black headlines is divorce and birth control and crime and war. Old-fashioned I may be, but I can't help thinking there's a close connection there somewhere. If the whole world seems to have grown very unsteady, to say the least, what else can you expect ? Barring only among our own people, there's hardly such a thing as a home or a family any more . . . not at least according to the papers.

"Now what kind of goings-on is that ? It was the

home — and the family in that home — that made the America I knew ; in the high places of the land as well as the low where I belonged. I was taught always to love my brother. How can you love your brother that's a Finn or a Pole or a Frenchman or German if you never were allowed by your parents to have any brother at all ? Or if the only brother you do have is by some other father or some other mother, and you know as little about him as you do about Charlie Ross or who struck Billy Patterson ? How can you love a brother . . . or a sister . . . like that, whom you don't know ?

“Did we have no crime in my day ? We did, indeed. There were a whole lot of us didn't belong to the Holy Name or the Children of Mary ; or the Epworth League and Christian Endeavor for that matter. Original sin was around then, just as much as it is today. We were, maybe, a little more refined in our talk and not given to calling a spade by its name right out ; but we knew a dirty shovel always for what it was.

“Murder was murder, in my day, and adultery was adultery. We didn't exalt the one to the skies as planned parenthood and the other as free-and-easy divorce or companionate marriage. No. We didn't

preen our feathers at the thought that our boy or our girl — instead of giving us a wee Joseph or Mary or Patrick or Brigid as a grandchild — was living the life of Reilly with an automobile, an electric refrigerator, a television radio and time and a half off for cocktails and bridge-playing. We did *not* ! Nor did we run over to the neighbors with shouts of joy to proclaim that our Gladys or our Gwendolyn . . . after six bad tries . . . had finally been able to live with a man she could marry . . . at least until it was time for the divorce.

“Surely, we planned as parents in my day. Indeed, we did. We planned for every child God might see fit to send us ; and we planned for them after they came as well as before. But we never planned *against* them. We planned that every child Almighty God blessed us with might have a better chance than our own fathers and mothers had been able to give us. We lay long awake in the night planning ; and we stinted and sacrificed in the day that those plans . . . with God’s help . . . would come true. In my day, we thought that that was progress : to give the next generation just so much more than we ourselves had had.

“We were poor enough . . . the most of us . . .

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at least in worldly things ; and we had to work hard for what little we had. It was a day before fine motor cars and radio machines. We didn't miss them. There is no joy in an automobile's running that can compare to the joy it is when your baby first toddles toward you across the floor ; and no music that comes out of a radio is like at all to that baby's soft prattle.

"No, in that day there were still those among us who had known Mr. Lincoln and served under General Grant. And if we had only the coal fire in the kitchen range by way of heat, those great men had been brought up poorer than we, with logs and brush in a smoky fireplace to warm themselves. Poor enough were they starting out in life, and yet they reached the highest place in the land. And maybe . . . soft and foolish as we were about our young ones . . . maybe something like that was in our fond planning for them.

"Pioneer ? What are you talking about ? Just because in my day we had no steam heat nor hot and cold running water, because we bathed in a tub on the kitchen floor, and did our own washing and cooking and sewing, and had the love and fear of God in our hearts, you think we were pioneers ? How are

you? We were *not* pioneers; and we never thought so. Nor did my Aunt Ann and Aunt Kate when they crossed the plains in a wagon to California think they were pioneers. They thought nothing about it at all, save that the opening of the West seemed to offer a better chance for their husbands and their children. They thought as we did, in a later time; and there was no foolish self-pity, and talk of pioneers about it.

“Don’t you ever make that mistake again and call me a pioneer woman! It leaves a bad taste in my mouth. The evening paper is too full of so-called pioneer women as it is. She was a ‘pioneer’ in the birth control movement; this other one was a ‘pioneer’ in sex freedom; a third is baldly announced as the ‘pioneer’ six-times-divorced woman to swim the English Channel; and a fourth is the ‘pioneer’ founder of the Communist League for Kindergarteners. Pioneer, indeed!

“No, I do *not* believe that woman’s place is only in the home. I’m not that old-fashioned, and I never was! But I do think that woman’s place is in the home at least some of the time. I certainly don’t think that her only place is gadding the streets, or dashing around hither and thither like a hen with

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its head off, night and day, day in and day out. It isn't only my friend, Nick Pappas, who's a Greek, has a name for that sort of thing. We had our own name for the likes of that in my day.

"No matter about that. I understand there's really decent women never stay home today. May Mary have pity on them ! I haven't much. No wonder they have to plan their motherhood. It's a pity for them that Almighty God, Himself, didn't plan it so that all there was to having a baby was to have it pop out of an automatic toaster between hands in a bridge game.

"Ah, no. He planned it differently ; and it's still His world and His planning . . . no matter how much He annoys these progressive pioneers. I'll stick to God's way.

"Always in my time, there were women who had children and let them run wild ; but never as wild as do these progressive women who caught on to being birth control pioneers too late. That must be very annoying. The only thing you can do, having *had* children, very unscientifically, and without benefit of parental planning, is to dash off in seven different directions at once spreading the doctrine of parental planning to others. Hoping all the time, you under-

stand, that the children you would not have had if you, yourself, had had the sense, may make up for your own unfortunate backwardness by disgracing your false motherhood and the stupid American idea of a family as much as possible. It is then your highest achievement that, once married, they all divorce themselves as soon as possible . . . on no grounds at all. The very least, you say, they can do for you is to give you courage to meet Bertrand Russell face to face, and shake his lordly hand.

“Faugh !” said Mrs. Crowley, “on such people . . . the kind that go around correcting the country . . . and their own household a disgrace to a decent woman. It is not only charity that begins at home ; right living and American decency begin there, too. A woman’s place is not simply in the home. No ! . . . but it is not outside the home until her own house is in order. And it is always, among the plain women who have had — in our America — to hew wood and draw water as I and my mother before me did. I am more than ordinarily suspicious of pampered daughters of nabobs who find social conscience only at the turn of life. I belong with Nancy Hanks . . . and for these others . . . sure, the Devil calls to his own. I don’t wonder at all that the Commu-

nists hail them. The devil quotes Scripture for his own purposes.

"No matter — with that sort of cattle. My own day now? How do I spend it? Sure, I shouldn't be talking . . . for in my own way I'm as great a gadabout as those I scorn, I suppose. Well . . . yes, in a way.

"But I have no sons nor daughters ; I have neither kith nor kin. I'm all alone . . . and the last of my line. I never did have but the one boy . . . my blessed Dermot . . . and he died unmarried in the War with Spain.

"He gave his life for his country, and I offered up my sacrifice with his. That's why I have a right to talk . . . for he was my only son, and he went as a volunteer, as a private. And there were those I know could have placed him in fine, soft places. He'd not have been my hero then ; he'd have been no son of mine ; nor I any mother of his had I wangled that sort of thing for him. And yet it isn't I who would be on the go today if God had blessed me with other children or with grandchildren of my being and blood. As it is, my own going to church and back does no one any harm ; it puts no un-American ideas into anybody's head.

“How old am I? Well, young man, it’s a good long time since I was a daughter, I’ll tell you that much. I’m as old as Ann ; and if you can figure that out you’re better than I was when my father first said it to me. I’m old enough to at least have grown the sense, whether or not I was born with it. I’m old enough, boy, to know that the peace I have in me now and have had all my life comes from the God Who blessed me in my parents, my husband and the single child He allotted me . . . and in being born American. I’m old enough to know that in trying to do my duty to them and to America I am doing His holy will.

“Maybe I am a bit of a gadabout now . . . which gives me little leave to talk about my neighbors . . . but all the gadding I do is in His service. I have no one else.

“At my age I can’t even do much for Him ; but after my own Mass and Communion, there’s often a Requiem or a Month’s Mind or Anniversary for some other poor soul in whose behalf I can add my bit of prayer. Or it might well be that Sister Ignatius of the White Sisters has found someone in her nursing rounds that I could help out with a little sewing or the making of a little sickroom delicacy.

"I go over to our own convent each day for Benediction ; and there's always some little thing I can do for Reverend Mother and the Sisters that they can't get out and do for themselves. Often, too, I'll have a little bundle of Catholic magazines and papers for the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, and I'll trot down with them in the course of an afternoon. Then, there's always the altars at church. I do my best day in and day out to keep them looking nice, changing the flowers and all, and always being ready to have the black antependium ready each night for a funeral next day.

"As for the rest of it, my day now amounts to nothing at all. It's not worth the talking about. The only kind of a day that *would* be worth mentioning, a hundred women here in the Old Parish live every day of their lives ; and think nothing of it.

"Theirs is the only kind of a day worth noticing, the day of a wife who matters, and of a mother who matters. And not only in the Old Parish, and not only among our own . . . all over the land there are thousands like them, working and sacrificing and praying, standing shoulder to shoulder with their men ; and rearing the children they bless God for, in His sight and to His glorv.

"Social service? Man alive, you have more clichés than I suspected of a writer like you. Social service, *inagh*! Why wouldn't I get into it? I was made for it, was I?

"Glory be to God, son, I've been in social service all my born days. Every Catholic woman has. But we never called it by any fancy scientific name like that. It is the Nellie-come-latelys who neglected their neighbor all their life who put a stylish title on it now to prove that they are 'pioneers.'

"What we called it was what God called it; love of neighbor. In my day that's all it was. We were all neighbors together, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile . . . one family to another. It wasn't considered bad scientific taste then, do you see, not only to have a family and be proud to belong to it; but also to be eager to have a family of your own, as large as God willed.

"Social service and social reform! To hear people talk you'd think they were brand new . . . invented by Communism, and prated about today by Dr. Mary Walkers who late in life found out about them both. And God forgive me, Dr. Mary, if I stain your name.

"Let them know . . . and let you know . . .

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that the Little Sisters of the Poor came regularly to my door collecting for the Old People's Home long before there was any talk of old-age pensions. The Saint Vincent de Paul took silent and unostentatious care of the poor in the Old Parish when the alphabet was just something you wrote on a slate. And don't talk to me about made-work to keep a man's integrity ! Old Father Sullivan — in the terrible cholera epidemic of 1857 — went to Fat-Belly Buffington, who was mayor then, and talked to him plainly. That's how you have your city cemetery at Maple Grove today. It wasn't to bury the dead in ; they were carried to old St. John's and Bear's Den. It was to provide work for the living, who would not take charity. W.P.A. ? Let no one tell me it's a new thing. Father Sullivan not only started it nearly a hundred years ago . . . but what is more he saw to its honest administration. I think it was Abraham Lincoln . . . the only man my father ever changed his party allegiance to vote for . . . said, 'you can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time.' You couldn't fool Father Sullivan . . . at any time.

"We've the greatest and grandest of background ; and for all we tell of it . . . for all some of us know

of it, indeed . . . we might as well be clams in the shell. Florence Nightingale learned all she knew from the Irish nursing nuns she begged to take with her to the Crimea. It makes me sick and tired to have Catholic nurses now parading around in honor of 'the Lady with the Lamp.' Let them go on strike, and honor instead the saints with the crucifix at the end of their Rosary who did the nursing that the lady with the lamp investigated. Let it be the cross they extoll ; and no lamp at all, unless they like the poking ways of supervisors with no knowledge of human problems.

"Go on . . . your Red Cross ! Don't talk to me of that outfit. It is neither this nor that. When the Black and Tans ravaged Ireland the Red Cross would give no help. Suffering nor sorrow meant nothing to the likes of them. It is a local problem, said they, who would joyously turn out for an earthquake in Japan. The pagans could have it ; but no relatives of Irish Catholics who built the country. They would rather print a poem in their book by Rudyard Kipling insulting the Church.

"And yet the fools . . . the fools . . . Clara Barton got *indirectly* from Florence Nightingale, who was no nurse but a supervisor of nursing nuns

. . . and Clara Barton *directly* got from the Sisters who were the Angels of the Battlefield the whole idea of the Red Cross. It's a living wonder to me that the cross is still allowed in the set-up.

"Give them all their just due . . . they had little ; but they have been in a position to talk about it, and we haven't. Give them what credit that the honest and sincere among them may claim.

"Give them that tiny portion . . . but let us claim our greater rightful share in all this talk of social service and social reform.

"Let none of them tell you, either, that we were neighbors only to our own. We *lived* the Sermon on the Mount, in my day.

"I have lived as close to as many Jewish and Protestant families in my day as I have Catholic. We were always neighbors together. We were hesitant maybe about customs alien to us in a time of trouble ; but our hearts weren't alien. I can tell you, young man, of hams and cakes and pies sent in . . . so humbly . . . to wakes in the Old Parish by Jews and Protestants, who just wanted to show their affection.

"Jake Rubinovitch watched all night with me the one single night I had my Dermot home ; and when

at three o'clock I started the Rosary . . . and broke down, he took it up.

"I mentioned it to him long after. 'Why not?' he said. 'If the Holy Miriam hears you . . . an Irisher, I guess she hears one of her own kind. And from the old pastor I learned the prayers.'

"That's over forty years ago . . . but I remember it. It makes one of those things that draw me nearer to God, and to the soul of America.

"All I have, save this decrepit old body I have, I have given to my country. My father and my Patrick served in the Civil War and my only son died in the War with Spain. But I never forget, too, that I am Irish, no more than that I am Catholic.

"That I am both Irish and Catholic . . . and my people before me . . . just makes me so much the better American."

I waved my hat to the ground. I am not yet afraid to make, on occasion, a gallant gesture.

"So, Mrs. Crowley," said I, "felt Carroll of Carrollton, and Commander Barry. That's why George Washington so eagerly accepted membership in the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick."

CONCERNING

PATRICK DONAHOE



AS I PASSED by Mrs. Crowley's little cottage the other evening on my way to Holy Name hall, she and Tim Sullivan's wife, Katie, were exchanging confidences over the white picket gate.

The new pastor had called a meeting of the men of the Old Parish to discuss plans for forwarding the cause of Catholic Action. I was a little early, so I had time and the wish to stop and chat awhile. At the same time I was more than a little wary of entering into argument with Mrs. Crowley. For all I knew, she might very well be resentful that it was among the men of the parish that the new pastor had initiated his Catholic Action drive. Mrs. Patrick Crowley is hardly a complete feminist in the accepted modern interpretation of the word ; but she has ever felt very strongly that when something is to be done, and done well, it takes a woman to do it.

Haply, however, the gossip was not of the meeting as I had feared. The two women were engrossed in talk of the alarms of war spreading from London and Tokyo, Berlin and Rome, Vichy and Bucharest even as far afield as the peaceful quietude of our New England city of Millington.

"Well, really, we might just as well not have a radio," Kate Sullivan was saying, "as far as getting any peace or comfort out of the thing goes. As I was saying the other night, I only wish we had kept the old graphophone — we had all the McCormack records. At least it would give you a chance to hear some music and relax for a bit.

"But as it is, Tim has had me nearly crazy, switching the stations around every fifteen minutes when he's home — with a bulletin on this and a commentary on that. The people that have yelled themselves hoarse in my living-room, shrieking panic and disaster out of that radio cabinet! More than once I've had to drop what I was doing and rush in from the kitchen to tell Tim for Heaven's sakes tune the thing down — what will the neighbors be thinking? But he'll tell me it's very important — it's Hitler or Churchill or Katzenjammer or Lowell Thomas that's yelling their heads off; and to hush up now, he

doesn't want to miss this ! I often wonder what ever happened to Major Bowes. I haven't been able to look for him on the dials this good while ; nor Fred Allen, who was always Tim's favorite on account of his being born Sullivan."

"I never had one of those machines put in," said Mrs. Patrick Crowley, with a satisfied smile, "and in more than one way I'm glad of it . . . very glad, I must say. If there's one place in the parish that that Hitler hasn't had a word to say, then it's in my cottage. This radio may carry his speeches all over the world, but not to me. I wouldn't have it !

"Give and take is all very well — but with the broadcasting it's the one on the air has the first and last word, with no rebuttal from you no matter how wrong he is. Now that's all very right and proper when it's the Holy Father speaking down to the Eucharistic Congress at New Orleans — I went over to Mary Shea's and heard that on her brother Dinnie's set — but I'd never even allow the sound of the voice in my house of any of these dictating persecutors and propagandists. I may be very easy-going and soft ; but I'm not that soft."

"Well, it does make you nervous at that," answered Katie, "the draft, and all this talk of war, war,

war. It's worse than 1916. It's awfully upsetting. It's a wonder we're not all nervous wrecks."

"Pay no attention to any of them, Katie!" said Mrs. Crowley sternly. "That's all they want, the whole lot of them . . . to get you and the likes of you who listen to them so riled up that you lose your balance. Then you'll start shouting for war with the rest, little as you want it. As it is, faraway cows have long horns; and you know what they say about barking dogs.

"Don't lose your head. If you had been through as many wars and alarums of war as I've been in my day, you wouldn't be talking.

"I wasn't fully grown when the Civil War started; but I was old enough to scrape lint and cut up bed linen for bandages along with my mother down in the basement of the old wooden church. Father Sullivan gathered together the women of the Old Parish for that purpose, for those were the days before there was any Red Cross.

"Yes, and I saw my father set sail for Washington with his regiment on the *Ben de Ford* from Long Island in Boston harbor. It was to the Massachusetts Ninth Regiment he belonged, the famous Irish Ninth. I remember it as if it were yesterday.

Didn't my mother let me carry the shiny gold piece all the way home on the stage in the little beaded reticule I was so proud of . . . that and my boots with red tops and tassels? I felt even prouder to be entrusted with all that money. I couldn't understand Mama crying all the way from Boston, when all of a sudden we were so rich."

"Where did you get the gold piece, Mrs. Crowley?" I inquired idly enough after we had greeted each other.

"Where did I get the gold piece? Don't you know your history, young man?" she turned on me severely. "It was the gold piece that came to my father as his share from the ten bags of gold that Patrick Donahoe gave Colonel Cass for the men of the Massachusetts Ninth, and they going off to the war.

"Your father-in-law had one," she turned to Katie Sullivan. "He always carried it in a little chamois bag as a pocket piece. He told me once he had carried it all over Rome, Italy, the time he went across the water to give the Pope a hand against those fighting him; and that he had shown it to the Holy Father one time they were talking together and the subject came up.

"I used to carry my father's in my bag wherever I'd go, and if I'd meet up with the Pope's Johnny we'd compare them to see which had kept the most shiny."

"Oh, I remember Grampa's gold piece," said Katie eagerly. "He carried that for years, right up until the World War. Then he insisted on putting that in with some money he had saved from his pension to buy a Liberty Bond. Tim wanted to make up the extra money for him, for he knew the great store Grampa set by that gold piece, but Mr. Sullivan wouldn't have it. He said that Patrick Donahoe would think shame of him when they'd meet above if he even dreamed of holding out that money from his country's cause."

"And I'll bet he would think shame," answered Mrs. Crowley spiritedly. "He would, indeed. Johnny Sullivan was right, as he always was."

"He was a great patriot was Mr. Donahoe. He was the three things in one, a great Irishman, a great Catholic, and a great American. Not that they don't amount to the very same thing in the long run. If you're a true man at any one of them, you're true in them all."

"I know Johnny felt bad about giving up the relic he had prized for so many years ; but it was the only

thing to do. Papa's I kept longer ; but once, in the height of the depression, when the Little Sisters of the Poor came around and I hadn't a penny to spare them I thought of the gold piece and I gave them that. In Papa's name and in that of Mr. Donahoe I gave it to them. And the Little Sister I gave it to, when I told her the story she cried ! Her own father, it seemed, had been a type-setter on the old *Pilot*. She was sure Saint Joseph's hand was in it, for no one had given them a thing all day.

"I didn't feel so badly about it then. And sure, if I had been stingy and kept it, I wouldn't have it now anyway, unless I was a traitor to my government and didn't turn in my gold. And wouldn't *that* be a nice tribute to my father and Mr. Donahoe."

"Who was this Mr. Donahoe who was bouncing around with bags of gold pieces?" I asked facetiously. "Did he strike a lucky lode in the gold fields in '49?"

"Then he did not," retorted Mrs. Crowley. "The money Patrick Donahoe made he made by his own efforts. He made it with the intelligence God gave him ; and indeed, he didn't pick it up off the ground. He made it the hard way, by work ; and he made it fair and he made it square ; and in the making and

in the having, he helped and aided and succored his own.

“For he remembered always, landing in Boston from Ireland and being the only Irish boy and the only Catholic boy in the school he went to there. Many’s the time the back of his frieze coat would be chalked with crosses by the other boys, who thought that to be Irish and Catholic was a queer thing entirely.

“If he had been of weaker clay, it might well have turned him from his race and his faith. Boys are conventional, even more than men; and it’s few boys have independence and courage enough to stand out against cruel attacks from their kind. New England is filled with Baptist Sullivans and Methodist Murphys whose grandfathers weren’t strong enough to hold out. But Patrick Donahoe was strong enough, and his name — instead of being forgotten — should be blazed on every Catholic boy’s heart.”

I looked at my watch. It was nearly time for the meeting in Holy Name hall to begin, and the new pastor is a stickler for promptitude.

“I’ll look forward sometime, Mrs. Crowley, to hearing you tell more about this Mr. Donahoe. He

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sounds like a man well worth while knowing about," I said hastily, "but just now I must be on my way. I'm headed for that Catholic Action meeting the new pastor has called, you know. . . ."

"Worth knowing about ? Well, I should say he is !" Mrs. Crowley answered me sturdily. "And there's no finer time than the present, young man, for you to get that knowledge. If it's Catholic Action is in it, and you don't know Patrick Donahoe's story, then the more shame and the less power to you. Now, don't get fidgety. I won't hold you too long ; but when I finish with you, should the new pastor ask for suggestions you'll have something to go on.

"You know, or you should, that the greatest single influence holding our people and their Faith together in this country in the last century — outside the hardworking but scattered clergy — was the Boston *Pilot*. Well, Patrick Donahoe *was* the Boston *Pilot*.

"He established that paper along with H. L. Devereux as far back as 1836 ; and he made a going thing of it. Why, in my father's day and well down into my own the weekly copy of *The Pilot* was the next thing to the prayer book.

"It was one of the truly great newspapers of the

country. Why, the very list of writers who were on the staff at one time or another is a golden chant of Catholic letters in America : Aguecheek and Laffan, Thomas D'Arcy McGee and John Boyle O'Reilly, Anna Dorsey and Katherine Conway, James Jeffrey Roche and Fathers Roddan and Finotti, to mention just a few.

"The Pilot made a deal of money ; but did Patrick Donahoe spend it on wild race horses and diamond rings ? He did not. He founded the Home for Destitute Catholic Children, and he helped greatly in the establishment of the American College in Rome. This is the sort of man he was ! When Saint John's Church on Moore Street in Boston was outgrown, he felt the need of a Catholic school in that neighborhood, so what did he do but buy the church building and turn it over to good Archbishop Williams for school purposes.

"I have told you about the gold pieces he distributed to the soldiers in the Civil War, to the men of the Massachusetts Ninth and to the Faugh-a-Ballaghs, too, the Twenty-Eighth Massachusetts Regiment. I wouldn't have time now to tell you all the other things he did for those Catholic Irish, and to take care of their families while the menfolk

were away at the war. *The Pilot* supported Mr. Lincoln zealously ; and when Governor Andrews presented the Faugh-a-Ballaghs with the flag of the Commonwealth at Camp Cameron in Cambridge, Mr. Donahoe presented the regiment at the same time with the green flag of Ireland. The wolfhound was on it, and the motto, 'Gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked.'

"No man was a more devoted friend of Father Mathew, when the Apostle of Temperance came to this country, nor did more to smooth his path and make his great mission fruitful. And no man suffered misfortune with more Christian Catholic grace.

"When the Great Fire in Boston in 1872 destroyed *The Pilot* plant and press and plunged Patrick Donahoe into ruin, he simply put his back to the wheel and started all over again. And when a second fire again brought destruction and Archbishop Williams, to help this great Catholic layman regain his feet, bought a major interest in the newspaper — he paid back the Archbishop and all his other creditors in a short time ; and was once again sole owner of *The Pilot*. Not only that, he then es-

tablished *Donahoe's Magazine*, and the like of it we haven't today for all our culture. It was in *Donahoe's* that Ethna Carberry and Colonel Patrick Guiney's daughter, Louise, did their best work. My own set of bound volumes is in the Old Parish library. Look them up, boy, if you want to read good writing.

"Catholic Action is it? Patrick Donahoe *lived* Catholic Action, while all you people now have got no farther than beginning to talk about it. You never heard of him? Indeed, he was recognized in his day, even if he seems to be forgotten now. Notre Dame University gave him the Laetare Medal in 1893 for his signal contributions to American Catholic progress. And well they might! Yet you stand there and tell me you never heard of him. Julius Caesar had the right of it; the good men do, dies with their bones. . . ."

"No, no, Mrs. Crowley . . . 'lives after them,' " I corrected her.

"Then see to it," said she, "that you get up there tonight and tell the men of this parish — for one group at least — what I have told you of Patrick Donahoe. If one one-hundredth of what *he* did comes out of the lot of you in a hundred years' time, then

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Catholic Action will set the world ablaze. But, pshaw, you people will only talk Catholic Action. You'll do that until the cows come home. The man I speak of *lived* it."

CONCERNING
CHURCH MANNERS



SUNDAY, after the ten o'clock Mass, a spirited discussion arose at the horse-shoe pitching in the vacant lot beyond Paradise Alley that the men of the Old Parish use as their recreation grounds.

I was vigorously hailed as I came around the corner of Holy Name hall, and asked to settle the argument ; for although I am rarely called upon for judicious advice by the higher councils of the Church in Rome, in the Old Parish my knowledge of things Catholic is considered deep and wide. The appreciation of my fellows, however, has never gone to my head. Not since the day I overheard myself described in matters of the kind as "the next best thing to Mrs. Patrick Crowley ; but a dam poor second at that."

In this case the crux of the matter under debate was a large engraving of a church interior placed prominently the day before in a stationer's window

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on Main Street. Everyone, I gathered, on the Saturday afternoon walk down town had noticed it. So had I. It was a rather misty representation of the nave of the Cathedral of Chartres.

The horseshoe pitchers in their discussion of the picture had lined up in two rigid groups. The one led by Johnny Fitzgibbons, who had almost reached France in the last World War, maintained that it was, indeed, the likeness of a true Catholic church. The other group, with James Kielty, our sexton, vociferous as its head, maintained that it was no such thing . . . it couldn't be ! . . . "for where were the pews, tell me that now ?"

My assurance that it was, truly, a picture of a great Catholic cathedral was accepted, tacitly at least ; but when James Kielty left the group a few minutes later to ring the bells announcing the Eleven, he gave me a backward glance of great dubiety ; and he was still shaking his head as he disappeared through the door leading into the vestry.

I recognized the look and the thought behind it. "If there were no pews," it said, "then there'd be no kneeling-benches ; and no kneelers, then no banging of them once Mass was over. Now, who ever heard,"

the scorn was manifest, "of a Catholic church without kneeler-bangers."

Had James Kielty spoken his doubt openly, I could have answered him. I remember well one church in, I think, New York, where the kneeling-benches are screwed tightly to the floor ; and it seems to me that once I ran across the same thing in a church in Boston. I am certain that Shamus would have taken my word for it ; although I know that such an experience is well outside his ken.

In the Old Parish, you see, we have kneeler-banging developed to the standing of an art, an art that is loud and high and free. The new pastor, I have more than once noticed, does not see eye to eye with us in the matter. He has a regrettable tendency to start convulsively as he rises to his feet from the prayers after Mass when . . . after a few tentative bangs as preliminaries, . . . we get into the swing of the thing, and really let go in salvo after salvo of resounding clamor. Indeed, fond as I am of the *Tenebrae* service, no matter where I hear it chanted, I never can help wishing that a few really authoritative bangers from the Old Parish could be on hand for the dropping of the books as the lights are restored.

Glorious as are Father Finn's arrangements of the Lamentations for *Tenebrae* at the Paulist church in New York, I must say that the book dropping is very feeble. I wish Father could come to our church sometime to catch our closing salute at the Nine. It would be a lesson to him.

I said as much to Mrs. Patrick Crowley in telling her of James Kielty's righteous indignation at a Catholic church without pews and kneeling-benches. She laughed.

"It takes all kinds to make a world," she said, "and it takes all kinds to make a parish ; but for all my travels and all I've seen give me our own right here in Millington for diversity.

"Kneeler-bangers aren't the only experts in their field that we have, although we have the finest of them in the country, mark you. I was thinking just the other Sunday that there are few parishes our size anywhere with a better developed collection of haunch-squatters. The church was full of them that day.

"Not that our record in that is by any means perfect. The Brady boy who is thinking of studying for the priesthood kneels up so straight that he throws out the looks of a whole pew. Some of the

older people, too, have the same deplorable habit. Stiff as ramrods they kneel, as if the Lord wouldn't more appreciate a good nonchalant slouch.

"On the main, though, I must say as I scanned the pews that Sunday . . . well before Mass had started, let me tell you . . . that I found the haunch-squatting ranks fairly uniform. If I weren't too old and set in my ways I'd almost have half a mind to try that way of worship myself. It looks very tempting. With your haunches on the seat behind you and your knees barely aslant the kneeler, you're as comfortable as if you were in a loge at the moving pictures. The pity of it is that you can't smoke, nor even sneak outside for a cigarette while the sermon is on.

"Of course, I'm speaking now of the fall and winter style in haunch-squatting where your knees actually do touch the kneeler lightly and graciously. In summer you take care, if you are wearing a white linen suit or a light-colored frock, not to come in contact with the kneeling-bench at all. You squat further back on your seat then, with your knees just sort of a-tremble in the air. That may be hard on your soul's salvation, I grant, but it certainly saves cleaning bills.

"For that matter," she grinned impishly at me, "I

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saw you dusting off the knees of your trousers leaving church this morning. It serves you right if they wear out before the seat does. You're as behind the times as I am."

"Not quite," I retorted, "for I saw you entering your pew this morning in a way that made me think of that old poem Aggie Kelly used to recite . . . 'when Greece her knee in suppliance bent . . .'"

"*'Marco Bozzaris,'*" she said delightedly. "I suppose you mean because I made a proper genuflection. Ah, boy, you should have seen me at the close of Mass. I held up a whole double pew, rushing to get out of church, by genuflecting in the aisle instead of making a little bob as I rose from my seat.

"We've a grand collection of those in the parish . . . knee-bobbers ; but I was very dismayed at the Children's Mass a week ago to see that the nuns were insisting that the little boys and girls genuflect right down to the floor. I had more than a mind to complain to Mother Theresa over at the convent. As the twig is bent, you know. You couldn't tell what strange kind of Catholics children instructed like that might not turn into."

"The type," I said, "that makes the Sign of the Cross as though they were a Bishop imparting his

blessing, a free move of the hand up and down and across and back."

"Aren't they the limit!" Mrs. Crowley made rejoinder. "I've noticed them, too. There's more than one in the parish has a tendency to actually make the Sign when he blesses himself. But the finger-twiddlers are growing. I can report that to you.

"There was one young fellow that took a seat just ahead of me Sunday last. I never saw anything more modern and progressive in my life. He had it all down to a science. He was a picture . . . a picture for *Puck*. The new pastor was just mounting the pulpit as this fellow sauntered down the aisle. I was sorry for that. The pulpit cut off the new pastor's clear view of him; and I know the new pastor thinks we have a tendency to be old-fashioned. That lad would have shown him his error.

"Yes, indeed. It would have done any up-to-the-minute Catholic good, just to see his genuflection. If you weren't watching him eagerly, anxious to learn the very latest in church etiquette, you would have sworn his knee did not move. But it did, it did . . . in just the faintest, suavest, most *subtle* way! It was a treat. By all odds the most refined and reserved gesture of the kind I ever saw.

"And as he haunch-squatted . . . and his haunch-squatting was just as perfect . . . and went to bless himself, the twiddle of his fingers in front of his face and chest was a caution. Just so much and no more. It was a lesson to all those around him. I could see more than one hand-mover of the old-fashioned type wince. I nearly did myself to think I was antedated.

"I think I told you that he sallied in at the Gospel ; but did I indicate a touch of uncouthness in him that brought him down front in the church ? It was very weak of him to allow the usher to lead him on that way. In just so much he failed to gain my complete approval.

"Granted that he was a Change-the-Book-Arriver, or a Gospel-Comer, as I like to call them affectionately, still there was something radically wrong in his early training. Your true Change-the-Book-Arriver is not only that . . . he is also proud of being a Back-of-the-Church-Standee. They tell me that at the Lazy Man's Mass at twenty after twelve on a good Sunday there are twice as many people standing in the back of the church and in the vestibule than condescend to take pews."

"I'll have to tell James Kielty that's probably why they had to take the pews out of the Cathedral at

Chartres," said I, "to keep up with the fashion of the times."

"That's it," said Mrs. Crowley with a smile, "that's it. They had to make room for the standees by preference. You certainly wouldn't want them wandering up and down the aisles *looking* for a vacant seat. Lord knows we don't countenance that sort of thing in our parish, except maybe in the last few pews. There is at times a struggle for a place in them, I'll admit — especially for the aisle seat. For it certainly is a joy to force people to climb over you. I suppose there are churches where people gladly push further into the pews, but not with us. We know our rights. If we get an aisle seat we hold on to it. We know enough not to step out into the broad aisle and let someone else grab it. Why, it's the only way to be sure you can sprint out of the church before the priest leaves the altar. That's great sport ; to see who'll make the open air first each Sunday. It's got so now I hear that at the Lazy Man's Mass every foot of the aisle seaters is out in the aisle at the *Ite, Missa Est* ; the leg to the knee follows after, at the beginning of the prayers ; and by the time the priest rises to his knees the rush is on.

"Yes, indeed, the first one out of the church and

the last one up to the rail for Holy Communion are the ones that get the palm in the parish today. 'Tis a hard-fought race for the one ; but for the other, Constance Casey wins hands down.

"She's a miracle of timing. The *Agnus Dei* and the *Domine non sum dignus* can go by, and for all you can determine there's nothing farther from her mind than 'receiving.' The priest can go up and down the altar rail and back again ; Constance never stirs. But just let him take a look about for stragglers, and then start up the steps to the altar, and Constance slips from her aisle seat and makes her modest, shy way down the broad aisle. It's too bad she does her great stunt so infrequently. For some reason or other, and I suppose it's only a coincidence, she always seems to have a brand new outfit on at the time."

"Did you see her wedgies the other week?" I asked. "The shoes, I mean."

"Is that what they call them? Indeed, I did. First off, I thought she had got up at the last minute and forgot to take off her bedroom slippers. I very nearly reached out into the aisle to signal her to go back before the whole congregation spotted them to her shame.

"Ah, how we have run on . . . the two of us," Mrs. Crowley said with an amused little laugh. "We've kept it up pretty good, haven't we . . . making fun of our neighbors?" She looked at me sharply, suspiciously then. "See here, don't you put any of this in the paper. People are so slow at the uptake sometimes that they might not realize we were fooling between us. They'd call me another Maria Monk, and you worse than that Farrell fellow out in Chicago.

"Not but what every word I've said isn't true. It's true enough, but only of the odd one of the parish that the rest of us rightly scorn. For every one of them, there's a hundred like old Neddie Meehan who gets into church in time to have the Stations and the full three decades of his beads said before the Mass candles are even lighted ; and who shrinks in to the furthest corner of his pew if you so much as halt in the aisle beside him. The Old Lady Cahill is another one who comes to my mind . . . although why her more than scores of others I can't tell you. She's another one of the early comers, who, for all her lameness, genuflects to the floor, wedges herself against the wall, and opens her prayers with a full and reverent Sign of the Cross. She is usually a lit-

tle delayed in reaching the altar rail for her daily Communion but it is only because, crippled as she is, it takes her so long to climb out of her pew and make her feeble way down the church. The priests always wait for her, but upon my word there are tears in her eyes if she thinks she is holding him up. Let that man and that woman represent in any story you write the real people of the parish. For they do . . . they do !”

“And for good measure,” I said teasingly, “I’ll add the name of Mrs. Patrick Crowley.”

“Get along with you !” she said, but there was delight in her voice.

CONCERNING
THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL



IN MY WAY home from the library one night last week, I passed three of our Old Parish stalwarts coming along Saint Mary's Street by the churchyard from the monthly meeting of the *Bona Mors*. They were talking together very excitedly — Mrs. Patrick Crowley, Mary Ellen Shea and Tim Sullivan's wife, Katie.

The theme of the discussion I found as I came abreast of them was the latest *ex cathedra* pronunciamiento of Mike Casey's girl, Constance. Since Connie came back from a year with the "Madames" at their convent school in Paris, with a trip to Rome for Holy Week added on for extra measure, she knows it all . . . as far as the Church is concerned. In matters Catholic, there is no holding her, as the old people say. She'd be willing to give the Holy Father himself cards and spades — and expect to win over him — on any question of liturgy or doctrine. She has insisted upon becoming the Old Parish authority

on all things liturgical and ecclesiastical ; and it does seem to some of us that almost any day now she will decide to take over the little minor matter of Faith and Morals as well. We wouldn't put it past her.

Now Constance is a sweet, good girl ; and we all readily grant that she has had many more advantages than the rest of us. We unquestionably bow to her superior judgment in the use of the right knife not to eat peas with, and the wrong way in which to curl your little finger when you pick up a cup of tea. But with more than one of us, it goes down hard to have her establish herself as the *Emily Post* of our religion. We wouldn't mind so much, but she seems imbued with crusader's zeal and is not content, at all, to let well enough alone. I understand she told Agnes Kelly last week that the depth of the lace on the new pastor's alb was an inch more than the rubrics allowed ; and that she had half a mind to speak severely to him about it.

I doubt very much if she would ever have nerve enough for that . . . although nerve is not a thing in which she is lacking . . . but it goes to show what we lesser mortals have to put up with. I, myself, see eye to eye with her on a fuller appreciation of the liturgy ; yet I do wish she would tread a little less

heavily on the sensibilities of our deeply pious older women.

I was passing on with a nod and a bow the other night, but Mrs. Crowley's thin hand came from under her cape and grasped my arm. I knew that I was in for it, for I had caught Connie's name. I also knew that I must be very careful what I said if my own view of the matter under discussion ran contrariwise to that of the august Mrs. Patrick Crowley.

"Did you hear the very latest?" broke forth from Mary Ellen Shea before Mrs. Crowley could speak. "Here's news for you! You're a bad Catholic! Yes, you are . . . you're no better than the rest of us; and we're all in the same boat. You were born and brought up in the Old Parish and that puts the stamp on you, the same as on us. What do you think of that now?"

"We're narrow . . . that's what we are, all of us. We're not universal! Because we've stayed here like bumps on a log saying our prayers and going to Mass when we should have been sashaying over to Paris, France, and gallivanting around Rome, Italy, studying up on our religion. Catholics? Sure, we don't know what the Faith is all about. We lack universality . . . isn't that it, Katie?"

"Well, something like that . . . words to that effect, anyway, is the way I heard it," said Mrs. Sullivan much more mildly. "But I wouldn't get all worked up over it, Mary Ellen."

"Wouldn't you ?" said Mrs. Crowley decisively. "Well I would . . . and I am ! It suited the good Lord to put us here and to keep us busy here at home, in Millington. He didn't, evidently, choose to have us go traipsing around the world. I guess if He thought it was important we should, He would have done something about it long ago."

"Maybe we haven't as good an idea of the universality of the church as some that have been able to travel and get around more ; but the whole world can't be on the go all the time. Somebody has to stay home, and evidently that was the lot was intended for us. I always had the wish and the desire to get to holy Rome and, maybe, meet the Holy Father. There's nothing in the world I would have liked better ; but I do have Pope Leo's blessing that the old pastor brought back from Rome for me, and I set as much store by that as if I had been there myself. I was never much good on the water," she consoled herself momentarily.

Then she spoke more spiritedly. "But if it is uni-

versality you want, you don't have to go to Europe to find it. Universality, how are you? We have it right home here in the Old Parish. And as for my being a bad Catholic because I stayed home here and minded my own business, then the Little Sisters of the Poor never thought so, or the Vincent de Paul man. They were glad enough to find me home, and not have the door locked against them either. Universality, *inagh*! I guess if the truth were known we're as universal in the Old Parish as you'd find anywhere, barring maybe a Cardinal; and there's few of us can be that."

I hastened to reassure the three women that Mrs. Crowley was once again quite right; the more eagerly because, in the Old Parish and under the old pastor, I, for one, had found that universality of our Faith in richer measure and with deeper appreciation than in all my travels.

The Old Parish in its founding was of Irish ancestry. Its people were Irish born, or Americans whose fathers or grandfathers had been born in Ireland. That was long ago in the pastorate of old Father Sullivan, parish priest of not only the whole city, but of the county as well. As time went on, even doughty Father Sullivan found the far-flung boundaries of

such a parish, its population swelling with the rising tides of immigration, too much for the shepherding of one single man. And from our mother parish year by year new parishes sprang into being under other shepherds.

The Old Parish, itself, harkens back most truly to the days of Father Sullivan, and — before he came as our first resident pastor — to the visits of Bishop Cheverus and Fathers Fitton and Larrissey. The very old in the parish, like Mrs. Patrick Crowley, still talk of Father Sullivan and how he used to ride the vast boundaries of pastorate in his buggy behind his fast mare. With his castor hat and double-breasted frock coat, his high-winged linen collars and his black stocks tied in flat bows, he was, they say, the very image of Daniel Webster. They say, too, with a chuckle that his favorite text was, "With my rod and my staff will I comfort them"; and add that it wasn't the staff he was ever known to use.

Time, however, has made many changes not only in the size of the parish but in the complexion of its people. The racial background of the Old Parish is still largely Irish ; but we have, as well, many English Catholics from Manchester and Liverpool ; and many of Scottish descent from Cape Breton and

Prince Edward's Island, whose ancestors fleeing the Highlands after *The Forty Five* brought the treasure of their Faith untarnished to New Scotia in America. We have one or two Italians ; and in the parish, too, are families from Bavaria and the Austrian Tyrol, grown so much a part of us that Irish and English alike confuse their backgrounds with our own. Even in this slight instance have we, you see, felt the Oneness of the Universal Church.

Something of all this I tried to tell the three women as we walked slowly along. Mrs. Crowley would not be convinced, however, that certain of the people I mentioned of English or Scottish or even German descent were any other than Irish, so truly has the melting pot been effective in the Old Parish. But Mrs. Sullivan . . . born Katie Gross . . . began to nod her head understandingly.

I had other strings to my bow. Within the present Old Parish boundaries are the Portuguese congregation of the Church of *Ecce Homo* and the Polish mission of Our Lady of Krakow. We have all loved shy, gentle Father Silva for years. No one, priest or layman, was dearer to the heart of the old pastor. We have a like fondness for bustling, cheery, little Father Krasnowski who, until his own church

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was builded, used our parish hall for his people's Sunday worship.

We may never hope to see the twinkling tapers of the procession of the pilgrims at Lourdes in the Pyrenees, nor kneel to the silver sweetness of the trumpets as the Holy Father is borne on the *sedia gestatoria* into Saint Peter's ; yet we have stood reverently beside our Portuguese neighbors and friends as the statue of *Ecce Homo* has been carried, on the feast day, about their parish grounds. We have with them, and with their understanding, *beheld the Man* behind the smiling face and beneath the ermine and red robes of the crowned Boy King. To Bethlehem in Palestine we may never go ; but each Christmas we see the Bethlehem that we know best re-created for us in the crib that is Father Krasnowski's pride, with its handcarved wooden figures brought all the way from distant Poland.

From a certain drawing-in of her lips and a half unconscious shaking of her head as I mentioned the Portuguese, I recognized that my leaven was working in Mrs. Patrick Crowley. She was thinking, I could almost be positive, that it was high time she made the rounds of the parish again, collecting our

used Catholic magazines for her dear Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. They are Portuguese nuns who watch over the misfortunate girls who come before our city's courts. I knew that Mrs. Crowley was as regular as clockwork in her attendance at five o'clock Benediction in the missionary sisters' little convent chapel.

I turned then to Mary Shea and Mrs. Sullivan to make mention of our French Catholic neighbors and friends ; but here I was outdistanced at once. The two women knew much more than I, and proved it volubly. Mary Shea, with a timid sniff, said, "Don't tell me. Don't I belong to the Third Order Dominicans down at the Church of *Notre Dame de Pitié* ?" She called it Notre Dame of Pity, but never mind. Her spirit was proud of her French affiliation.

And Katie Sullivan, not to be outdone by humble Mary, broke in to tell me of the *pardons* of Brittany and all she had heard of the blessing of the fishing fleet at St. Malo from the lips of her dear friend, Sister Ignatius, whose whitewinged Breton cornette and flowing black cape have been bringing comfort and healing to the Old Parish for years. I was going to say as long as I can remember ; the actual date

was that of the expulsion of the religious orders from France, our White Sisters, Daughters of the Holy Ghost along with so many others.

It was the thought of exiles I suppose that made me think then of old Armenian Mary. She sold needles and pins and other little household articles in a suitcase door to door. I may have mentioned it otherwhile, but I told the story again to Mrs. Crowley, to Mrs. Sullivan and Mary Shea, as I tell it now.

The old woman, her head handkerchiefed, came to the door one day when I was a child, and Mother bought some small thing from her. It was late in the afternoon, I remember. "Excuse," said Mary quickly with a pitifully humble smile, and dropped down on her knees before us, made the Sign of the Cross and bent her head in prayer. "Excuse," she said again, "but all day, nothing ; now something. I have to thank God." And the light in her eyes when she found that Mother, too, was "Cat'lic" I shall never forget. It was my own first instance of the universality of the Church.

Mrs. Crowley, who knew old Armenian Mary well, spoke up quickly then to add her word to mine. It was she who brought up wan, harassed Father Shakeer, to whose congregation Armenian Mary be-

longed in the little Maronite mission parish of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon. He was so poor, and he was so good. Trust Mrs. Crowley to discover that Miss Rosella, the district nurse, was paying out of her own pocket to have a quart of milk left each day for the little priest that he might have that much worthwhile nourishment. She brought that to the attention of the old pastor ; and with him, aided by the Sullivan girls and Pat McCabe, went to work with a will, and by whist parties and little lawn parties raised enough money so that Father Shakeer could at last build the tiny frame chapel that was his heart's desire ; and leave the poor tenement that had served him and his poverty-stricken people for months as church, school and rectory alike.

Oh, yes, we knew and loved the Syrians in the Old Parish, just as we knew and loved the French, the Portuguese and the Poles. Were we not all Catholics together ?

And finally, we knew the Ukrainians ; although they . . . as Mrs. Crowley said afterwards . . . took a sight more knowing.

Indeed, until the old pastor spoke to us sharply from the altar one Sunday, we were in grave danger not only of not knowing them at all ; but worse, of

sinning against them. Up until the time he spoke to us, we had more than fought shy of the men and women we saw sometimes on Sunday crossing the circus meadows to the wooden church building that had sprung up in our midst almost over night.

Johnnie Riordan, the grocer, it was who told us that the clergyman over these Ukrainians was a married man . . . with children ! When he told Johnnie he was a Catholic, quite rightly we felt did Johnnie refuse his trade and give him cold looks that followed him to the door. He and his, we were certain, must even be worse than the schismatic Poles who tried Father Krasnowski's patience so sorely.

Imagine the horror of the parish when we learned that Mary Gibbons, the teacher, and a member of our Children of Mary, was instructing this married minister and a good part of the men of his church in citizenship. You wouldn't mind so much . . . *but on her own time !*

She had little to do, and was no better Catholic than she should be, we decided, after we had it from her own lips that not only was the man married, but that he served Holy Communion with a *spoon !* Cubes of bread in a chalice of wine, that's how she said he served it ; and moreover, that women and

men sat apart in his church ; and that a screen with doors, mind you, hid the altar from the congregation ! What kind of goings-on was that ! Catholic, indeed !

It gave us then the shock of our lives when the old pastor very testily . . . for him . . . told us that these people . . . Ruthenians . . . were under the Holy Father just as well as ourselves. He explained then that according to their rite married men could become priests, although priests could not marry. And about the Holy Communion, too, and all the rest ; he explained that at length.


We were nothing if not crestfallen, the whole lot of us. It just went to show how wrong it is ever to pass judgment. You never know. As it was . . . months later . . . we all had a great personal thrill when that lovely good man, Father Rankovics, pastor of Saint Josaphat's Ukrainian *Catholic* Church, and a hundred men of his congregation, took out their first citizenship papers in a body. Was it not our own sweet Mary Gibbons who instructed them ; and was it not our own old pastor who made all the preliminary arrangements with Judge McDonough ?

Of all that, we talked together with great satisfaction. I was not surprised then when Mrs. Crowley

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left us at her gate to have her say with great spirit, "If Miss Casey had only stayed home instead of gadding for foreign parts, how well she'd understand the universality of the Church. As it is, she doesn't know what it is all about, the poor thing."

CONCERNING
FIFTH COLUMNS

FTER a week of misty, murky weather in the Old Parish, the sun broke through the grey clouds on the day before Memorial Day. Its warmth and the soft Mary blue of the sky gave back to Mrs. Patrick Crowley some of the serenity that the dark rainy days and the insistently depressing war news had taken from her. When she had placed her sheaves of white and purple lilacs on her grave in our old churchyard cemetery, she mounted the little knoll behind the church to the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes ; and said another Rosary there for peace in the world.

She smiled tenderly as, walking down the hill, she saw a small boy running against the wind in the open meadow behind God's Acre trailing a great white box-kite aloft. Her Dermot, she remembered, had always flown kites in the spring ; she thought of the fun they had had making them together, of the

twine she used to save for just that purpose, how important it was to have the tail just right. . . .

Lost in her reverie, she nearly collided with two men ascending the narrow path to the grotto. She excused herself hastily. It was Tom Murphy and Dan Pat Ryan of the Holy Name. She was at a loss to recognize them, toggled out as they were in white plasterers' overalls, jackets and caps. They grinned at her as she stepped from the path to let them pass, for Dan Pat was bent half-double by a sack of cement he was bearing across his shoulders. "We're going up to have a look at the grotto," he said, "see what needs doing after the winter. Touch it up where some of the stones may have worked loose." Mrs. Crowley walked on, her thoughts still tender. "What a nice thing for the two of them to be doing, giving up their justly-earned free time like that."

A half hour later, Mrs. Crowley's hardwon serenity . . . for Decoration Day with its memories accentuates her great loneliness . . . was abruptly shattered by a wild peal from her door bell and the immediate frenzied entrance of timid Mary Shea on the run.

"Oh, Mrs. Crowley," burst out Mary, "they've come . . . they're here ! I saw them !! The whole five columns of them !!! They've landed in the old cemetery, and we'll all be killed dead in our beds before night prayers and Benediction. Call the police . . . call the mayor . . . call up the President ! !"

"Well, what on earth ails you, Mary Ellen Shea ?" Mrs. Crowley rose up from her rocker. "What do you mean by bursting in on a body like that ? Where's your eye-glasses . . . and your hat ? Look at you. . . go over to that looking-glass and get a look at you ! Your hair streeling down like a wild one. Tidy it up at once ! You look like a heathen. What will people say !"

"Oh, Mrs. Crowley, never mind, I can't . . . don't wait . . . just *come*. They'll be here any *minute* ! We've got to hide out. I saw them . . . at the cemetery. I just took off my glasses to wipe my eyes and I saw their plane. I just dropped my glasses and ran. Never mind my hat . . . it must have fallen off."

"Your head would fall off if God hadn't tied it on," said Mrs. Crowley tartly. "But I don't intend

to lose my head nor what little wits you've left me. Why should we hide? What have we done? And who's after us?"

"*Them,*" whispered Mary ominously, and began to stammer twice as frantically as before. "The Five Columns! I saw them! I saw their parachute up over the cemetery and two up on the hill . . . lurking. At the grotto they were, dressed just like in the movies, with packs on their backs and machine guns. Come on, Mrs. Crowley!"

Mrs. Patrick Crowley stared at Mary Ellen with mixed emotions, but speechless despite them all. Then, hard as she tried to control herself, she felt her nose begin to twitch and her lips to tremble. To master herself, she moved to the window to dissemble for a moment. Long before she could tell Mary Ellen what she had really seen, and convince her of it, Mary, she knew, would be off in a violent fit of hysterics. She thought quickly as she gazed out the window.

Then suddenly — "Mary Ellen," she turned calling sharply, "come here! Look over there on the church lawn. What do you see between Holy Name hall and the rectory?"

"O-o-oh, Mrs. Crowley," shrieked Mary in freshly

rising panic, "now will you believe me ! All those soldiers in uniform going to plunder the house of God ! It's the Nazis or the Reds . . . it's the *Five Columns*, I told you it was. The Lord spare us !"

Mrs. Crowley's voice was like a whip. "If you had your glasses and the sense that God gave you, you'd know it was nothing of the kind. You'd see very well that 'tis only the Old Parish Boy Scouts, with our curate at the head of them, paying a visit to the church before they set off on their week-end hike. Put up your hair, and come back to the cemetery with me to get your eyeglasses and your hat. I'll show you there what foolishness got into you from too many movies and too much radio. And let's hear no more talk of Five Columns."

I met Mrs. Crowley at old Saint John's burial ground on Decoration Day afternoon. "Your graves looked nice," I said, "but I missed you in the parade this morning. Were you with the Women's Relief Corps or the Spanish War Veterans' Auxiliary?"

"The graves do look nice, both here and in the church graveyard," Mrs. Crowley said slowly, "with all the flowers, and the Grand Army, and War with Spain markers and the little flags. Memorial Day has always brought me more than a share of sadness ;

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but it has brought pride as well . . . pride in being the daughter and the wife and the mother of warriors.

“I still have my pride in my dead . . . but this year the sadness and the loneliness is greater than the pride. I couldn’t even go see the parade this morning, let alone ride in it, although they offered me a carriage as they do every year. My thoughts these days . . . even a day of patriotic remembrance like today . . . don’t go back as they used to the glory and the bravery of my men in war. No ! I only see now the horrible futility of all wars. I can only feel the heartbreak they leave behind. My every thought and wish and prayer these days goes forth for peace. I pray to God that in our time it will not again come to other American daughters and wives and mothers to know my sorrow, to know my loneliness. . . .”

She broke off suddenly and leaned over to lift up a vase that had fallen over on the grave-plot by which we stood. When she had straightened up she was composed ; and in a quick turn of spirit continued sharply and acidly to tell me of her experience the day before with Mary Ellen Shea.

"I don't like it !" she spoke positively. "I don't like it at all, all this hysteria. And I like still less the war propaganda that's behind it, stirring it up. I don't want my country to have anything to do with this war. I say that with all my heart and mind and soul, and I'll go on saying it and praying it. And yet I suppose . . . indeed, I have no doubt about it . . . that if I keep on saying it loud and long enough, the word will go around in some quarters that I'm one of the Five Columns. That's the penalty for thinking American these days, for not professing a divided allegiance . . . on the popular side.

"I've known this sort of thing before, and no good ever came out of it. Here in Millington, old Father Sullivan was accused of being an Abolitionist before the Civil War began ; and a Copperhead when the war was on, because he counselled the same moderation that Lincoln did. And it was part and parcel of the same thing — the Jingoism that later rushed to profiteer in rotten meat . . . that cost me my son, in '98.

"I remember standing before the *Daily Post* bulletin board when we were in the World War. The boy was just sticking up a bulletin announcing a

three-alarm fire at the hat factory. The saddest voice in the world, speaking low beside me, said, "Those Germans again."

"It was old Benno Maier, our organist at the Cathedral for over fifty years, murmuring to me the wild sort of accusation that was going the rounds for every calamity from a cloud-burst to the fall of a loaf of cake.

"Benno was the most completely American man I ever knew, not barring my own men ; and yet there was delegation after delegation going to the old Bishop asking that he be discharged. It was a known fact, they insisted on telling the Bishop, that Benno was playing subversive music at the Cathedral. It boiled down to 'The Wedding March' from *Lohengrin*, no less, mind you. The blessed Bishop gave them short shrift, let me tell you.

"I can't call to mind any born Germans in the Old Parish today, and Red Russians we never had ; but with Italy in the war over there, I'm expecting every day that a committee of self-constituted patriots will be calling on Angelo down the street demanding that he peel all his bananas and oranges before their eyes that they may be certain no Five Column propaganda is tucked away in the pulp.

"I picked up the paper the other day and saw a picture of gray-headed and white-haired mothers of America . . . or something like that, they called themselves . . . every lassie of them squinting her eyes along the sights of a gun. They're going to shoot parachutists, and they're making ready now. They're every one of them bound she'll be a Moll Pitcher or a Dolly Stark or die in the attempt. Nothing so tame as being Angels of the Battlefield for them, healing and nursing sick and wounded as has been woman's place since time began. Not at all. They're going to be battle-maidens or nothing. Barbara Frietchie or bust, is their motto. The four-score years and ten part of it is all right ; they certainly didn't look any younger than old Barbara. No, from the picture I'd say they all had great need of either bi-focals or two sets of spectacles or not a general, miles behind them, would ever be safe.

"Five columns ! Witch-hunting, that's all it is. Not but what as I pick up the morning or the evening paper I don't find at least five columns and five columnists that I, myself, could easily dispense with. I've been brought up to believe that only the Holy Father — of all the millions of people in the world

— is infallible, and that alone when he speaks *ex cathedra* on matters of Faith and morals. These people are not only infallible ; they're impeccable — to hear them tell it. You should read some of these Five Columnists to learn what infallibility really is : it means *you're* completely right and the other fellow is completely wrong, and don't dare argue the point. Their columns are calumny of anyone who disagrees with them.

"To my mind, all this wild talk of Columns and the like, all this propaganda-fed hysteria, is very, very evil. I have no use for spies and I'd know one if I saw him at his spying ; and know how to handle him if necessary. I've long known and spoken of it that there are forces here truly subversive to our American democracy. But this, after all, is a free country ; that's what counts most. With all this Column talk the greater evil is being lost sight of in the lesser. What evil there is, and its stamping out, should never, through hysteria and false accusation, bring persecution and hate to innocent persons.


"I told you of old Benno. It was only the day before yesterday that Constance Casey came to me with the story of a wealthy German family that had moved into one of the big houses on the Hill. 'They

say they're refugees,' said Miss Constance with very raised eyebrows, 'but they are not Jewish ; I know that for a fact. And I think it's only too significant that they seem to be rolling in money. If you ask me, the man's quite evidently a Nazi spy !' "

" 'No one's asking you,' I told her, very coldly, 'but since you ask *me* I'll tell you the truth about them, for I've called upon them. He has money because by good fortune he had excellent investments in Switzerland. He is a refugee ; but you're right he is not Jewish. He happens to be a Papal Chamberlain, and a very old friend of the Bishop. The Bishop knew him of old when he studied in Rome. The only column he has any connection with, my dear, is this : he's a pillar of the Church.'

"I was never very good at arithmetic," said Mrs. Crowley with finality, "but I'm better at it than most. I can add five columns as well as the next, but I need pencil and paper to do it. I can't add them in my head. If I did I'd be as far wrong as Constance Casey or Mary Ellen Shea. And in times like these when correct addition is important, 'tis better to let those with the proper equipment handle such problems."

CONCERNING
THE SUMMER

T WAS very strange, indeed, to meet Mrs. Patrick Crowley coming home from the Nine last Sunday all by herself. The Nine in the Old Parish is the friendly, family Mass, and Mrs. Crowley usually comes up Saint Mary's Street surrounded by friends.

She hailed me, not exactly dolefully but a little wistfully, I thought. I waited for her to come up to me.

"I do declare," she said at once, "there wasn't a soul you'd know at church this morning. I've switched to the Nine for the summer, since last Mass is low anyway. No, there was hardly a one that I could do any more than bow to. All strangers! And, my gracious, it used to take me the good of a half hour just to turn the corner from the churchyard to my own house, after Mass — what with running into this one or spying that one that you might

not be seeing so readily through the week. It has made me feel very lonely and old."

"I saw Mrs. Killoran at the Seven," I said. "She and John 'received.'"

"Oh, no, I wasn't looking for Maria. I wasn't expecting to see her. They've taken a cottage at Tiverton for John's vacation; he gets three weeks this year. They were planning on leaving this morning early so I said goodbye to them last night, since I can't possibly get down to see them before Tuesday.

"And Agnes Kelly and Mary Ellen Shea left yesterday on the steam-cars for the New York World's Fair. They wanted me to go along, but I wouldn't give the Soviets that much encouragement, I told them. And besides I saw the Columbus Exposition in '93.

"No, I knew I wouldn't see any of my own intimate crowd . . . although I did have my eye out for Katie Sullivan; but there was a time, as I say, when I could at least say 'Good morning' to a good nine-tenths of the congregation. I couldn't today . . . I wasn't able to this morning. No. The Old Parish isn't the same . . . not in the summer, anyway."

"Well, with the hot weather so many people are away now," I said consolingly. "They have cottages at the beach or go on long automobile trips. I think even the new pastor accepts the fact that our congregations fall away in the summer months."

"Then he shouldn't !" Mrs. Crowley spoke vigorously, "For it isn't so. That Mass was crowded this morning, every seat was taken, and if I were frivolous enough to turn around in church I'd be willing to say that I'd seen the vestibule filled with standees. I'm not talking about crowds ; I'm speaking about the number of people I didn't know."

"It's not that everybody is away. In these hard times, for everyone in the parish able to go away on vacation there's a half dozen has to stay home. We're a two-weeks-vacation parish at best, and you know it. The people were there all right, lots of them I felt I'd almost like to know, and who would like to know me. But there's no chance at meeting people any more in the summer time."

"Well," I said patiently, "in the fall it will be different. The clubs will be meeting and the sodalities, the library will be open ; there'll be lots of chance to meet these newcomers. The summer is always quiet in Millington. Why, I noticed in the

paper yesterday that five of the Protestant churches have stopped services until Labor Day, save for a union service at the Congregational church downtown."

"Kind father to you," sniffed Mrs. Crowley. "And I suppose to your way of thinking we should follow suit. Because the most of them go away for the summer or don't go to church at least, we should do the same thing? If that's what you're trying to tell me then you don't get my point at all.

"What I am complaining about is that everything is shut down in the summer . . . just as if we *were* non-Catholics. It didn't use to be that way, I must say."

"But Mrs. Crowley," I said a bit impatiently, "didn't you tell me the church was crowded at your Mass? I know it was at mine."

"Of course, it was crowded. The very idea! Why wouldn't it be crowded? What do you think we are in the Old Parish . . . a lot of heathen or Communists or worse? Did you think to find it empty and yourself the lone worshipper? The time, my boy, is a long way off, thank God, when all our outlying parishes have to close their churches and only the Cathedral will be open on a summer Sunday.

"It's not the church, it's the parish I'm talking about. It's the parish that's shut down for the summer . . . and I don't see why. It would be different if all our people skedaddled off the minute Mass was over to be away all week. But with the times the way they are, you know very well it's the most of us have all we can do to afford to stay home, let alone go gallivanting.

"We were never a rich parish and the old pastor used to take that into consideration. The pleasantest times I ever had in the Old Parish were the summer times . . . and it was in, and of, the parish they were. I used to look forward to the summer . . . but no more . . . no more!"

We had walked along as far as her cottage. "Would you stop in for a few minutes?" she asked, "I made peach shortcake this morning, the old-fashioned kind, and there's lemonade on the ice, or some of my root beer, if you'd prefer that. We could have a little party," she said rather wistfully.

We had the little party out under the arbor in her garden. The air was softly laden with the fragrance of her flowers, beds of phlox and sweet alyssum, mignonette and asters, marigolds and peonies. She plucked a bunch of bachelor buttons for my lapel,

and was very gay then as she pointed out her soft, velvety pansies, her orange and yellow nasturtiums and the tall purple-white iris. Butterflies danced everywhere.

The last of the rambler roses sparkled with red rosiness over the lattice above our heads ; and the bees softly droned about the honey-suckle and the great spikes of hollyhock for which Mrs. Crowley is famous in the parish.

It was the pleasantest of mornings ; and we talked long and fondly of long-gone summers in the Old Parish.

I knew whereof Mrs. Crowley spoke ; for even in my own growing days my most delightful summer memories are of days and evenings that were part and parcel of the Old Parish.

The evening lighting display at the New York World's Fair was, I am told, of surprising grandeur. Agnes Kelly and Mary Shea brought back to us stories of its bewildering glory.

It could not, I am sure, ever match the transcendent beauty of the Chinese lanterns and the strings of colored electric bulbs that used to turn our parish grounds into fairyland on the nights late in June when the Old Parish held its annual lawn party.

The Old Parish lawn party was never really a commercial enterprise, even though by its means we helped to build our parochial school and the new convent for the Sisters. It was, rather, in every sense of the word, a parish party. It was of us and for us ; and so we enjoyed it.

It was the chance of the world, do you see, for our young housewives unskilled in baking to get for a song the masterly mixed cakes, succulently frosted, heavily iced and creamily filled, wrought by the master cooks of the parish, and lavishly displayed under Mrs. Crowley's beaming eye on the Altar and Rosary table. Marble cake, angel cake, devil's food cake, apple-sauce cake, cake weighted with "fruit" — raisins, currants, citron, orange peel, walnuts — cake in triple and quadruple layers ; cakes fit for a king, but the like of which no monarch has ever been able to taste.

The Children of Mary, you will remember, had the candy booth. For days before the lawn party opened, every kitchen in the parish swam in the sweet aroma of fudge and penuche, of peanut brittle, of taffy, of fondants, and of plain old-fashioned molasses candy.

And nowhere in the world of handicraft has there

been the like in needlework of the crocheting and tatting, the embroidery and drawn work, that the women of the *Bona Mors* — in the form of doilies and chair backs, bureau scarves and table throws, sofa pillows and pin cushions — set forth proudly on the counters of their stall. There was work there that would put the Bayeux tapestries to shame.

Nor were the men of the Holy Name idle. Not at all! The soft drink tables were theirs, and the caner-ing and the African Dodger. I have a snapshot of the Bishop taken one year — caught all unawares, of course — with his arm pulled back and the ball ready to throw in an effort to win himself a cigar.

Not that I think he would mind having his picture taken that way, for he . . . like the old pastor, whose guest he was . . . always entered freely into the spirit of the lawn party. It was so completely a family affair.

In a larger sense, the Orphans' Picnic at Forest Hill Gardens on the Fourth of July was also a family affair, although it embodied not only our own Old Parish but the other parishes of the city as well. The Orphans' Picnic was an all-day outing with sports and a baseball game in the afternoon and, in my youth, fireworks and a balloon ascension to crown

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the day. It was held, of course, to provide monies for the continuance of the work of the orphans' home ; but no one thought of it in that sense. No one thought of it as Catholic Action, either ; but I never hope to see Catholic Action so well exemplified.

No, we thought of the Fourth of July picnic only and always as a joyous reunion of all the Catholics of Millington ; and a chance, too, to show Nora Callaghan's boy and the little Donegan girl . . . whose father and mother both died at the time of the influenza . . . that as far as we were concerned they were as dear to us as our own.

For the shoeboxes that were carried on the crowded street cars that left the centre of Millington for Forest Hill Gardens all day long held lunch not only for ourselves and our families, but little special treats as well for the children of those who had been our neighbors. It was for them, more even than for our own children, that we splurged on bottled soda, on ice cream, and great thick slices of chilled pink watermelon. And on the hillsides above what had been an old trotting park, they sat with us, gorging themselves on chocolate cake, watching the sports . . . and we told them how we had loved

their parents, what a strong, handsome man John Donegan was, and what an athlete ; and how Nora Callaghan had been the prettiest girl in the parish, and as sweet as she was lovely.

We crossed over parish lines that day, and obliterated them completely. McCarthys from the Immaculate Conception sat down with Sullivans from Saint Mary's and Brodericks from Saint Patrick's on the grassy banks, and gathered the children from the Home about them. We were all one together.

In fact it was the one day of the year when we children with parents almost felt slighted . . . our mothers and our fathers paid so little attention to us, and so much to the children of their dead friends. We had vagrant thoughts of running away and becoming orphans ourselves . . . especially as the chaplain of the Home, the most adored among us of the young priests of the diocese, athletic to the core and also the most deferentially kind and courteous of men, moved about among his charges calling them by their first names affectionately, as an elder brother. What wouldn't we have given for that accolade !

In that time of my youth, the summer in the Old Parish held truly golden days.

I may not recount them all ; it would take a book for that. I may not forget, however, the 'bus trip to Boston every August on which the old pastor took the altar boys of the Old Parish as his yearly treat. It was a treat of treats, indeed, for the old pastor, being perennially young and wise in the ways of boys, made the trip's goal a big-league baseball game. And it was not only the "servers" he took, as a reward for their early morning faithfulness, but every boy as well who merely marched in the long double line at Solemn High Mass or at Grand Vespers. Of all great days, that was the day . . . the greatest day of our lives, we privately decided ; next to our First Communion Day, of course.

That was a boy's day. The girls had their outing, too, to Newport Beach for bathing and a shore dinner — the old pastor's smiling return to the Children of Mary for the Sunday afternoons they had spent teaching us smaller fry the Catechism. Two special electric cars he used to hire, no less . . . and our sisters said that once they were at the Beach nothing was too good for them. They came home laden with souvenirs and salt water taffy. Mrs. Patrick Crowley used to go along as chaperon . . . and once the old pastor was even able to lure her on a

roller-coaster. To our sisters that was greater delight than seeing a home-run with all bases full. Girls, we had long ago decided, were funny.

Yet of all glorious, glamorous summer days, the climax of climaxes in the Old Parish was the day of the parish excursion on the side-wheeler *Houghs' Neck* down the bay to the amusement park at Rocky Point.

The parish was deserted that day ; its streets were empty. Not even the old and the infirm were left behind, for the old pastor always arranged the excursion for Our Lady's Day when everyone knows that the cure is not only in the water but on it, as well.

The weather was always fine, the sky blue overhead, the sun shining, and the water sparkling as the old boat ploughed down the bay. It was another day of shoeboxes and basket lunches ; but we lads looked forward most to the hundred-odd amusement devices with which Rocky Point Park abounded. We knew well that we had not to worry whether we were rich or poor or how much spending money our parents could allow us. The older people used to shake their heads when we reached the park, and say it was clear that the old pastor was

spending more of his money on us than the parish could hope to make on the excursion tickets ; but they said it fondly and affectionately.

And I, myself, remember most clearly after all these years, not the rides on the Shoot-the-Chutes and the Old Mill for which he bought such yards of tickets . . . but the old pastor in a funny linen yachting cap, on the bridge with the captain on the trip home, smoking an old pipe as he watched the moon glow on the water, and listening to the choir forward singing, "*Ora pro nobis*, 'tis nightfall on the sea." The moonlight made his face so blessed.

I spoke of that to Mrs. Crowley. "Blessed did he make the summer time in the Old Parish," she said softly. "God rest him."

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CONCERNING

IRELAND



THE EXACT date of her birth is one of the completely private matters in the life of Mrs. Patrick Crowley. No census taker nor registrar of voters has yet been able to make her admit to anything but a very chill "over twenty-one." If we were prying people in the Old Parish . . . and we were never that . . . we could no doubt find out the day and year of Mrs. Crowley's birth by recourse to the old calfbound books in which Father Sullivan kept his records when the Old Parish spread county-wide. But those old books now are precious treasures ; we know well enough that for no light purpose would they be brought from the diocesan vaults. And the city records were burned in the Great Millington Fire.

However, myself and a few others have always known the day on which Mrs. Crowley's birth anniversary falls. I cannot say how we have known

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it ; she herself will never mention it. Perhaps it was that my great-grandmother told my grandmother how well she remembered the borning of little Abigail McMahan ; may be my grandmother idly let slip the information to me. There may have been other gossips of Mrs. Crowley's mother who allowed the knowledge to trickle down to their descendants. At all events, Reverend Mother at the convent . . . Dan Pat Ryan's daughter, whose mother was a McShane and distant kin . . . Maria Killoran, of course, and myself ; we actually KNOW . . . and have long known, as we have long known too, that it was the better part of wisdom to keep our knowledge to ourselves. Never yet have we dared breathe it.

Aggie Kelly and Mary Ellen Shea, intimates of Mrs. Crowley, are quite sure that Mrs. Crowley's birthday is the fifteenth of August. Nor has Mrs. Crowley ever in the past taken any too great pains to disillusion them. Reverend Mother, Maria and I tacitly, too, recognize Our Lady's Day as the time for little tokens.

The cold, chill, raw truth of the matter is that it wasn't in August at all, but in July that Mrs. Crowley was born ; and of all July days, on the *twelfth*.

That may well sound like just another day in the calendar to you, if you are as hazy as I usually am on dates in general save Christmas and March the seventeenth. However, let me break it to you very gently: July the twelfth is the date of the Battle of the Boyne. And if that does not mean what it should to you, there are certain foolish people who hail it as King Billy's Day and the day of the Protestant Ascendancy.

"Change kings and we'll fight the battle over again," the Irish are reputed to have said when James the Never Mind had fled to Dublin and the battle of the Boyne Water was over; but even that crumb of ancestral comfort must be brushed away from Mrs. Crowley's tea table.

You see, Mrs. Crowley for all her staunch Americanism, for all her loyalty to the sorrowful and holy land of her ancestors, for all her acerbity, simply cannot find it in her soul completely to hate the *Sassenach* . . . the English. I am not speaking now of the government, but of the people. She will grudgingly grant you that the Boyne battle was fairly won . . . she detests the English James more than the Dutch William . . . But yet she will certainly allow no celebration in HER house on that day.

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And so . . . for these many a year, herself has denied herself an honest birthday party.

She had a birthday party this year. You could have knocked the whole Old Parish down . . . not with a feather but with the wind from the fluff of it . . . when we received our invitations: *The Twelfth of July . . . to celebrate my birthday . . . my years having reached a round number . . . five o'clock until seven.* So the command royal read.

We were all at the little white cottage on Division Street at five *prompt* ; all of us. In one way we were not . . . as we looked at each other . . . the group we had expected to see. Yet in another way we were. The gathering was emphatically of Mrs. Crowley's dear ones ; of that there could be no question. It was as equally not just a simple, ordinary grouping of the neighbors. Indeed, as we looked at those about us each one of us felt hallowed. Abbie Crowley had made very plain to us that we were of her *inner* inner circle.

Maria Killoran was there, of course, and her John ; and Aggie Kelly, Mary Ellen Shea and Tim Sullivan, the Pope's Johnny's son, and his wife, Katie. That goes without saying, as my own presence may as equally be taken for granted.

BUT the new pastor was there, who on many occasions has never seen eye to eye with Mrs. Crowley ; and Constance Casey. There the eyes have always been definitely crossed. Their presence was much more of a surprise to me than that of Father Krasnowski of the Church of Our Lady of Krakow, or our beloved Father Silva from the Portuguese church below the hill. They have been Mrs. Crowley's dear friends this long while.

And yet I more than gaped, little minding my manners, to recognize in our elect group : Mr. Davis, the banker ; the Old Lady Mrs. Nathan Buffum Burden, head of our Millington D.A.R. ; Jesse Higginbotham, who . . . although he belongs to the Old Parish . . . is secretary of the Loyal Sons of St. George and the Empire, Millington chapter ; and old Ned Meehan's grandson, who is our present commander of the Millington Post of the American Legion. At the sight of them . . . and there were a few others as equally strange in Mrs. Crowley's house . . . I almost forgot to bow to Father Beau-prêtre of *Notre Dame de Pitié* parish.

"Laws a massy," said I to myself, "something's up . . . and it isn't the price of butter."

That something came up with a jolt to most of us

as soon as we had finished our tea and little cakes, our highballs and solid sandwiches. It takes Mrs. Patrick Crowley to know how to do things. Emily Post has nothing on her. Whatever our individual tastes, we were all well satisfied ; and with each other of that strange company, mind, no less than with our refreshments.

There may have been others present lulled into false ease by nutbread of the blessed saints' compounding, fruitcake mixed by angels ; and an age old Benedictine that had nothing less than cherubim helping the monks compound it. They all placed me on my guard. I knew that lassie, Mrs. Patrick Crowley, all too well.

I was prepared for the sudden, authoritative tinkling of a silver spoon on a Belleek tea pot. I prepared those around me for the rising to her feet of Mrs. Patrick Crowley. The room had been like a suite in the Tower of Babel a minute before. It was as silent on her rising as the Tombs of Karnak.

"I have asked you all here," said Mrs. Crowley, who seemed suddenly to have shot taller than she really is, "because you are my friends ; and because we are all Americans together.

"There's the better part of you gathered here," she

said firmly, "comes of different racial stock than I do. I planned it so . . . and I could ; because being truly American I place no limitations of race or creed upon those whom I am proud to call friend. And since my blood is Irish . . . thank God . . . I think you all know the friendship I offer you is very open and very real.

"It is about Ireland, indeed, that I have gathered you here. As you have all long known, one of the deepest-hearted wishes I have is to see the Ireland of my ancestors wholly and completely free before I die. It is a desire that stems as directly from my love of America as from the sentimental affection I have for the land that gave my mother and father birth.

"It has a certain measure of freedom today, you will say. It has . . . for part of the country. But to an old woman like myself whose father and husband fought that their adopted land might be held 'one nation indivisible' that's not my ideal of what Thomas Davis called 'a nation once again.' It's not under present circumstances that Robert Emmet's epitaph may ever be written.

"To have twenty-six counties governing themselves and the other six under alien rule is no more

just nor proper than Hitler's claim to Poland because part of it was once German. It is just as if the War for the Union in which Patrick and my father fought ended with six southern states separated from the rest. And suppose that in those separated states were the most hallowed shrines of the people of the united states.

"It is so in Ireland. My own people came from Armagh . . . Saint Patrick's County . . . and Armagh no longer now belongs to holy, Catholic Eire. It is still in the hands of the invader. An Irish man or Irish woman who wants to make pilgrimage to the grave of Saint Patrick must cross a border from Irish to English rule. The Cardinal Primate of All Ireland, Saint Patrick's successor, must go from English held territory across a customs barrier to meet and bless the greater part of Saint Patrick's children.

"I say the greater part, for it is not true that the six northern counties are purely Protestant. That is as false as that it is by their will that the people of the north hold aloof from the south. In several northern counties an overwhelming majority of the people are Catholics with a deep desire to be joined with their brothers in a greater Eire ; in other

counties the Catholic Nationalists are in a present minority only because of the gerry-mandering of their election districts. If an honest plebescite were offered tomorrow . . . I take my stand upon it . . . Ireland would be one, and free.

“‘Lord Craigavon wouldn’t stand for it,’ you read in the papers. Take English support . . . in pounds that could well be spent on her own defence . . . away from Craigavon and he’d be another corner agitator. Hitler has the same kind of puppet stooges in all his conquered countries.

“I detest Hitler and all he stands for with all my heart and mind and soul,” said a very old Mrs. Crowley. “I said that before this war started, and I’ll keep on saying it. Saint Patrick himself could not hallow that man in my eyes.

“The pity of it is that I’d truly like to forget the old grievances of my blood and be friends with England. I want so much to believe in her and the justice of her cause. I love the English people . . . next best to my own, perhaps.

“I saw in the paper the other day of the arrival in our blessedly free United States of some little English children. Descendants of Oliver Cromwell they were ; and they were Catholic. On the wan-

ton butchery of Irish Catholic children by Cromwell I shall not enlarge. It was enough for me that in the slow turning of time his own blood had found the Faith he had tried so hard to destroy.

"It made me . . . myself . . . want to say, 'Let bygones be bygones.' But yet while the Irishmen of the northern counties are held — without the free expression of their will — under English rule, and over two hundred young Irishmen languish in a prison ship in Belfast harbor for seeking the full freedom of their country, how can I say it ?

"You can't say, any of you, that I haven't tried to do my part for all the victims of the cruel scourge that is raging across the seas. You don't have to speak, Father Krasnowski . . . they know. They all know.

"Poland, Finland, Belgium, Holland, France : my prayers have gone up for their suffering people and I have given my widow's mite to help them as far as it would go around. And I will, God give me strength, for all who are poor and helpless, and most of all for the little children. I am an American.

"Knowing that, you must allow me the same deep feeling for the land that gave me my mother and father. And try to understand why I cannot think

of England as the Galahad of nations when the sin against democracy of which she rightly accuses another forms a bar sinister across her own shield. I sincerely, deeply want to . . . but I can't.

"I pray each night for Poland and Belgium, Holland and Czecho-Slovakia and France, Norway and Finland. Yet when I go to pray for England, Ireland always stands in the way. My people have prayed for Ireland to be free for seven hundred years. It is too late now to pray for the conqueror . . . unless England, in the cause of true democracy, grants Ireland full independence.

"I want The Poor Old Woman to own all her four beautiful green fields. What relationship she joins with England then is her concern not mine. My prayer and belief is that it would be a brotherhood like that between Canada and ourselves.

"And that is what I pray each night with all my strength . . . to Saint George and Saint Edward the Confessor, to Thomas of Kempis and Thomas of Becket, to Saint John Fisher and Saint Thomas More that I may in my age truly call England blessed, and join in her cause wholeheartedly.

"I do really want to." Mrs. Crowley's voice trembled and her eyes were wet. And when little

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Father Silva, startled out of himself, said "Amen" surprisingly loud, there were none who joined in more fervently than those of us present of Irish blood.

CONCERNING

SUNDAY



AS SOON as I caught sight of Mrs. Patrick Crowley the other Sunday coming home from the High, I knew from the vigorous way in which she was gesticulating to Maria Killoran and Mary Ellen Shea that another terrible crisis had come in the Old Parish.

“If it was in Mexico or in darkest Russia ; if it was in Nazi-ridden Germany itself, you wouldn’t mind so much,” she was volubly proclaiming as I caught up to her group. “I’d put nothing past that Hitler or that Stalin, for sacrilegious impudence. But right here at home, right here in our own parish, to have the audacity even to *suggest* such a thing ! Why it’s downright, brazen blasphemy ; and nothing else but ! It’s all of that, if it isn’t something worse.

“You mark my words, Maria . . . and you, too, Mary Shea . . . if we ever let the like of that go by and don’t stand up against it, we might as well take

to our beds and be murdered in them. If a thing like that could happen here . . . here in our own Old Parish . . . then the country's doomed. I don't care what you say . . . the country's *doomed*! Let you bring on your Reds or your Nazis; the sooner the better, say I. But I'll still die fighting, it or them, I'll tell you that much!"

"Oh, dear, Abbie," said Mrs. Killoran deprecatingly, "you do take things so hard. You know it's not as bad as you're trying to make it out to be. It's not that bad, truly; and you know it."

Mrs. Crowley snorted and tossed her head, ready to lay the gentle Maria low . . . without benefit of church burial and in unconsecrated ground, I am sure. Then she saw me approaching; and down upon my poor head, as representing a younger generation, came her furious barrage. I did not get all she said, she spoke too fast and too furious for that; but I can tell you she said more than her prayers.

As nearly as I could gather when at last she stopped for breath, her sworn foe, Constance Casey, had been to the new pastor with a proposal that there be no future observance of Sunday. I looked at Maria Killoran in amazement. Her eyes had an amused twinkle, but she refused to deny Mrs. Crowley's pre-

posterous assertion. Mary Ellen Shea, I could see, was on the point of tears. The whole thing was, of course, ridiculous ; but Mrs. Crowley started in at once — re-affirming that the abolition of Sunday was Connie Casey's aim.

“Wipe them out, she would ; get rid of them altogether, she would !” cried the indignant old lady. “ ‘Tear up the Ten Commandments,’ says she to the new pastor. ‘They’re very old-fashioned,’ she says to him, ‘and completely out of date,’ she says, ‘and of them all there’s no one so behind the times as the one that mentions Sunday.’ ”

Of course, everyone in the Old Parish knows that Constance Casey and Mrs. Patrick Crowley never have, and probably never will, see eye to eye in parish affairs. Connie is the first of the new school of intellectual Catholicism ; Mrs. Crowley is one of the last of the Old Guard, who have builded their lives on faith and good works alone.

In this particular instance, despite Mrs. Crowley's vehement asseverations, I found that Constance was by no means suggesting anything so far-fetched even as calendar reform, let alone proposing to abolish Sunday or its proper observance.

What she had asked the new pastor was, that the

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monthly Communion day of the Children of Mary be moved forward in the week from Sunday to Friday. With pleasant weather ahead, she thought that the Sodalitarians . . . and herself . . . would be happy to have the benefit of still one more long week-end.

"Now, how could you have a Communion *Sunday* fall on a Friday?" trumpeted Mrs. Crowley, when Maria had patiently explained the whole thing to me. "Answer me that, now! How could you? Einstein himself couldn't do it, nor any other mortal man . . . let alone a snip of a girl like that Casey miss.

"Indeed, and well for him, the new pastor put her in her place anyhow. He told her off good and proper.

" 'It interferes with my gadding,' says she to him. 'Make Sunday fall on a Friday, my good man, or I'll be very provoked with you. And while I come to think of it,' she says, 'I could get a whole lot more gallivanting in, if Ash Wednesday didn't come until the second Tuesday in Advent. And while I'm about it, could you fix it for me so Easter and Christmas would fall on one and the same day . . . only

late in the afternoon so I could sleep late and still enjoy them.'

"Faugh ! 'Tis the offspring of Bolshevism right here in our own parish. That I should ever live to see the day when anybody could be so bold and brazen as to say that Sunday was a nuisance, and should be put aside in favor of a half hour only on the day we used to call Friday."

"Oh, dearie me," wailed Mary Shea, her face woe-begone, her eyes tearful, "if they're going to start doing that, they're just going to get me all mixed up. I'll never remember not to go to Mass on Sunday . . . and what'll I do about my First Fridays !"

Mrs. Killoran spoke sharply to Mrs. Crowley, "There you go, getting Mary all upset with your exaggerations. Pay no attention to her, Mary. She's just carrying on."

Then Maria turned to me. "Do you know, at that," she said, mildly, as she usually speaks, "it does seem as though there's a spirit afoot trying to turn Sunday into just another day. Lord knows, I'm not one that would hold out for a Puritan Sabbath. I glory in the fact that nowadays you can at least act natural on Sunday. In my girlhood you couldn't

even sew up a rip in your petticoat flounce on Sunday without courting eternal damnation.

"And yet freedom can be carried too far, as this girl is carrying it. I'm tickled to death that the new pastor gave her short shrift. As a matter of fact, between ourselves and the lamp post, I never was pleased with him after he moved the childrens' Monthly Communion from Sunday at the Eight to Saturday morning. I don't care if the great lot of them there was, and two priests serving, did hold up the starting of our own Nine. The people never complained; and it set apart Sunday in the eyes of those youngsters. You rant on, Abbie, and I have little to say; but I'd be fiercer than you if grandchildren of mine were ordered to make their First Communion on any other day than Sunday. There's a dignity and a holiness about Sunday. The people know it and feel it. I don't care what the curates think about it. I never did hold with expediency. No. I always liked Sunday . . . it had something that no other day could ever hold. But I don't feel the same spirit myself, the way Sunday is changing."

"It's this new idea of week-ends," Mrs. Patrick Crowley broke in on Maria's tenderness. "Every-

thing now is week-ends. People can't wait any longer for their vacations. In addition to those weeks, they must rush off every Friday night to sashay and gallivant around until Monday. In the summer they sleep on the beaches, and come home burned red ; in the winter they put Scandinavian contraptions on their feet, roll all over in the snow, and come home with frostbite and chilblains. Observe Sunday ? . . . it is an interval to forget between Friday night and Monday morning !

"I don't know, I'm sure . . . the week had an end in my day, and a beginning ; but we never made a pagan fuss about it. The end of the week meant SUNDAY, in large letters, to us."

She turned to me suddenly. "You . . . you're of a younger generation." Her sarcasm was thickly present as she continued, "What on earth did you *young* people do in your day to exist from Friday night until Monday morning ?"

She was being purposefully nasty, and taking her spleen out on me. Now there is a slight difference in the ages of Connie Casey and myself . . . in her favor . . . yet the fabric of the world was unraveled and rewoven in just those few years. Those were the old World War years ; and in them even the

Old Parish which is changeless knew the feeling of change, in manner if not in kind. The week-ends I knew, before that War, were vastly different from those I knew afterward. It was, and is, a strange new world.

In the old days, for example, Saturday was important only as the vigil of Sunday. It was the day set aside for the putting of our houses in order. Friday night, then, closed the temporal concerns of the week. It was on Friday night that you did your entertaining, at home or abroad; had a few people in for a game of whist, or went to the movies or a parish social.

That is . . . save in Lent. In the Holy Season you went to the Stations of the Cross on Friday nights, unless you were an awful pagan altogether. But other than in Lent, Friday night in the Old Parish was the last night of the week for pleasure. On the New England principle that cleanliness was next to godliness . . . and our Irish Catholic mothers were no less convinced of that than their Yankee neighbors — Saturday was sacredly and irrevocably set apart as a day of preparation for the sanctity of the Sabbath.

Throughout the Old Parish, Saturday was ushered

in loudly and resonantly. Not by any chime of the Gabriel bell or blowing of horns, but by the unsteady pound-thump-pound of hundreds of carpet-beaters somewhat lustily attacking odd strips of carpet, braided mats, and those glamorous small rugs that portrayed a Saint Bernard couchant . . . without brandy keg. They were sounds you no longer hear.

The rare Persians . . . from Afghanistan, New Jersey, if you should ask Mrs. Crowley . . . in the Maison Casey are vacuumed by the colored maid. Mrs. Killoran uses a carpet-sweeper for her broad-loom ; and Mrs. Patrick Crowley by daily brushing with damp tea leaves hasn't let a drop of dust fall on her flowered Axminster since Cleveland's first term.

Their modes of cleaning represent the Old Parish today. But in my day . . . yesterday, only . . . the air on every Saturday morning, from one end of the parish to the other, resounded with the stout and sturdy thumpings of "carpet-beaters" . . . coiled wire ellipses or fancifully-woven rattan racquets . . . wielded in varying strengths and endurance by the men of the parish ; men from six until over sixty.

That was the men's part in beginning the weekend. Indoors another . . . a woman's . . . war was being waged more silently, but even more vigor-

ously with a scrubbing of floors, a wiping of woodwork, a dusting of furniture, a cleansing and a scouring that made the very clapboards tremble.

You might easily have thought, if you came among us a stranger within our gates, that we were momentarily expecting a visit of state from the Holy Father or President Roosevelt . . . T.R. Not at all ; we were simply "getting ready for Sunday." The smallest child would promptly answer you so, it was so much of an established weekly ritual.

Luncheon on Saturday was a light one ; what our mothers disparagingly called a "pick-up" meal, the sort of snack that took a bare hour and only the top of the range to prepare, with no recourse to the oven. Cans had been invented at that time, but just for sardines and salmon. Even among Millington brides the can-opener was the last article of kitchen equipment to be bought, and then surreptitiously in neighboring Bradford.

After luncheon, our fathers invariably thought that "they would go and lie down." It was the time of their hard-earned weekly nap, and the nap forestalled discussion about whether or not the screens should come out or the storm-windows be brought up from the cellar. We younger fry were more or

less free to play — within limits. Outdoor play — no movies. Movies — on a *Saturday* ! And the next day Sunday ! It would be a depraved sinner, indeed, who would even venture to suggest such a thing.

Nor was the afternoon one long continuous romp. We had to be back home in the house at three, to make ourselves tidy for Confession. At four we were in our separate pews before the confessionals in the Old Parish church — boys on one side of the box, girls on the other — worriedly examining our consciences. Our “Keys to Heaven” were not in those days especially well adapted to our own personal problems. But we had been through our Catechism in Sunday school, and we knew only too sadly that our neighbor’s ox referred to Charlie Casey’s football or Bill Brady’s bicycle.

The line waiting “to be heard” was always long, no matter how early we were. We could hardly ever slide along — from seat to seat and pew to pew as the shutters opened and closed — in less than an hour. Yet, it was remarkable how light-hearted we felt after we had gone to the altar rail and said our Penance ; how we felt like walking on air all the way home. We used to remark it, wonderingly, to each

other ; and answer sagely that it was the weight of the great load off our minds.

Just ahead of us was the bountiful Saturday night supper in a house shining clean and warmly fragrant with the odor of baking. Coming after Confession, it was the meal of the week that seemed particularly blessed. It was, of course, in the New England of the Old Parish, steaming brown earthenware pots of succulent home-baked beans, topped by fat slices of salt pork. The cylinders of brown-bread steamed, too. Our kitchens were doubly enriched by the odors of warmth and cleanliness.

Supper over, we bathed, or were bathed. And then — bed. On Saturday night the Old Parish went to bed early. I can still hear the cry, “Come on now. You’ve had your bath — skip ! You’ve got to get to bed. Remember tomorrow is Sunday.”

And that went for the elder folk as well. They might do a little last minute shopping, or themselves go to Confession after our early supper ; but I’ll venture to say with little fear of contradiction that the entire parish was in bed by ten.

We were as early up on Sunday morning. The children’s Mass was at eight ; the favorite parish Mass at nine ; but in every household, someone had

already been up and out to the Six or the Seven. The Seven was the Mass set aside each Sunday in turn for the monthly Communion of the older folk's sodalities, the Altar and Rosary, the Holy Name and the Children of Mary in turn.

Our High Mass, a Solemn High Mass on the feast days, was the Old Parish last Mass at half past ten. It was then we had the full choir under Aggie Kelly's direction in all its glory, singing Marzocchi's Mass or Gounod's *Messe Solennelle* ; although at the Nine there was singing, too, the old familiar Catholic hymns by the junior choir. The last Mass then had little likeness to our present "Lazy Man's Mass" at twenty minutes after twelve. For one thing there were never any communicants. The Six or the Seven, and the happy sacrifice of rising early to receive the Blessed Sacrament, meant Holy Communion to us. If for some reason we wanted both to attend the High and also to receive Communion, the answer was simple : we attended two Masses, as Mrs. Patrick Crowley did every Sunday.

After Mass we younger people were set to study our Catechism until we had learned the assignment of the day by heart. Once we had every word in every answer to a question "pat," and had been

heard in them by our mother or an older sister, we were free to put aside the brown linen-covered books and read quietly until dinner. Our reading was not rigorously restricted to *The Faith of Our Fathers* or *The Lives of the Saints* but *Tom Playfair* or *The Boys at St. Cuthbert's* were looked upon with greater satisfaction by our parents than *The Rover Boys* or *Dave Porter* series.

Sunday school was held in the church, from three until four. Each pew held a small class with a member of the Children of Mary as the teacher. Sister Mary William supervised the boys' classes on the epistle side ; Sister Gertrude, the girls, on the gospel side. And the old pastor walked up and down the aisles beaming upon everybody.

At four o'clock we moved forward, more compactly ; and the pews in the space our moving had left filled quickly with our parents and the neighbors. Those of our teachers who sang in the choir hurriedly left us for their places in the choir loft ; those of us who were "on the altar" scurried to the vestry and slipped on our cassocks and surplices. The head altar boy with his long wand tipped each candle on the altar with flame ; the booming roll of the organ sounded above and behind us ; two by two, came our

altar boy comrades from the vestry, behind the crucifer ; then the acolytes bearing lighted tapers ; our two curates ; and then the old pastor in the majesty of his great white and gold cope. In another few moments the sonorous chanting of Grand Vespers had begun.

The church became pungently fragrant with the incense of Benediction. We joined our piping voices to those of the choir in *O Salutaris* and *Tantum Ergo* ; and bowed our heads in awe at the ringing of the sanctuary bell, as the old pastor slowly raised the golden ostensorium and blessed us with the Sacred Host.

When it was time for the reciting of the Divine Praises we shouted them out lustily like early Christians or the Crusaders — as Sister Mary William had taught us — to show that we were proud of our Faith. And we went home in the dusky twilight, silent with the mystery in which we had shared.

Supper — and so to bed. It was Sunday night, you see — certainly no night for play ; and we must be fresh and rested for work or school in the morning.


“What on earth ails you ?” Mrs. Crowley broke in upon my reverie. “I suppose like all the rest, and despite all I’ve been saying, you’re standing there plan-

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ning how you can get off somewhere next week-end
. . . knowing very well that it's Holy Name Sun-
day."

"Mrs. Crowley," I said solemnly, and the old lady
stared, "could I come over and beat your mats
next Saturday morning?"

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CONCERNING
THE LIBRARY

HE NEW PASTOR is striving mightily to bring the Old Parish to the very forefront of modern Catholic progress ; but the good man is having his minor difficulties. I grant that we are stubbornly old-fashioned and loathe change as the Devil hates holy water ; but, for my single self, I must admit that it seems a great pity that each new act of his . . . if only in some petty particular . . . invariably rubs one or the other of us the wrong way.

We are more than proud of the reputation of the new pastor in the diocese, as a theologian and authority on the liturgy of the Church, but . . . to ourselves, and ourselves only, for we would never speak of such things outside the parish family . . . we rather deplore the fact that for so many years before his appointment as our pastor his great brilliance of mind had caused the Bishop to withdraw him

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from parish affairs to make him chancellor of the diocese.

You see, our own point of view is completely parochial, whereas the idea of the parish as a definite and all-important unit of the Church spiritual is a thing he has grown away from. *We* feel that while pastors and curates may come and go, the Old Parish marches on. Too many of them come from outside and do not, until they are ready to leave us, understand the parish at all. They are too ready many times to accept outward signs for what to us has no inner significance. It has been a shock to some of our curates to have the whole parish turn out in droves for the funeral of an old man or woman who seemed in their poverty and humbleness to be among God's almost forgotten.

We knew, however, that old "Aunt Fan" bought the first sanctuary carpet years ago, and herself tacked it down ; we knew that old John Sullivan was a personal friend of our Holy Father, the saintly Pius the Ninth ; we know who were the founders of the Old Parish over a hundred years ago, and we know their descendants. And we are a little harsh and more than ordinarily scornful when someone whose grandparents we knew unfavorably has latterly become

church-minded, and open-handed when the collection box comes around. He will carry the canopy on Holy Thursday only over our deep protest ; and we are not unvocal, even if there are few of us who make the choir.

The thing is, of course, that we are confessedly . . . even reactionarily . . . provincial in our outlook. Chauvinism of any kind in the universal Church is totally beyond the new pastor's ken. He feels, no doubt, that we lack the larger viewpoint ; we think, perhaps without sufficient reason, that he, in turn, lacks the human touch.

However that many be, his most recent announcement filled us all with great joy. A few Sundays past, he mounted the pulpit at all the Masses to tell us that he was opening the library in our new parish school, not for the children alone but for the use and convenience of all the parish. He had subscribed, he said, in our name to the Catholic Book Club, the Spiritual Book Associates and to the Pro Parvulis Book Club for the children ; as well as to all the leading Catholic newspapers, magazines and journals.

Moreover, from his own library, he continued, he had made careful selection of the books that he thought would be of greatest interest to us in the

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field of Catholic Action, books that would benefit us morally, spiritually and intellectually. A capable attendant, he added, would be in charge of the library, which would be open every day save Sunday from two in the afternoon until eight in the evening.

Under the direction of the librarian, he planned to form a reading circle to be named after Gerard Groote (the man who wrote the *Imitation of Christ* for Thomas à Kempis) for the reading, reviewing and discussing of worthwhile Catholic books. He thought the name he had chosen for the literary group, he said, in one of the rare flashes of understanding that make us open eyes, was particularly fitting in a parish that held firmly to the truth and realities of the Faith, and sought no outward distinction.

If there were those in the parish . . . and he was sure there were . . . he flashed a very human smile . . . who possessed worthwhile Catholic books that they would be willing to add to the present collection, the librarian would be very happy to receive them.

Not a soul in the Old Parish but greeted the announcement with enthusiasm. We could talk of nothing else, once each separate Mass was over ; for

in the Old Parish we prided ourselves on being "great readers." In days gone by, every family had its subscription to *The Pilot*, and in every attic there are, still piled up, copies of the *Ave Maria* and *Donahoe's Magazine*. More than that, in the reign of the old pastor, our Sunday School library was the largest and finest in the diocese. That library, of which we had been faithful adherents, was discontinued when the old parish hall was torn down to make room for the new school. In the interim, while the school was still in the building, the old pastor died; and the Sunday School library that was so dear to him had been more or less forgotten as the years went by.

More power to the new pastor, we agreed, for reviving its glory; and just as soon as the new library was opened we went, singly and in pairs, "to get us a book and catch up on our good reading."

But we came away from the school perplexed, confused and upset. Who should it be to whom the new pastor had given charge of the library but Constance Casey . . . of all people! And trust Connie to take it into her head to supervise and regulate our reading and try to raise our literary standards.

Larry O'Toole, who had gone to her hopefully seeking a chance to re-read *My New Curate*, came

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away with a copy of Mauriac's *God and Mammon*, which . . . pious man as he is . . . he claimed he could make neither head nor tail of.

John Riordan, the grocer, I found dozing on his porch one early evening over a weighty philosophic commentary by Jacques Maritain; while his wife, Julia, in the hammock, was spelling out Abbé Dimnet's *The Art of Thinking* to the Old Lady Cahill from next door, who kept interrupting plaintively every few minutes to ask if there was nothing at all in the book about the Irish.

Mary Ellen Shea, who helps Mrs. Crowley fix the altar, even although by her maiden state she may never be a member of the Altar and Rosary; and who as Mrs. Crowley's handmaiden prides herself on at least a secondary knowledge of things Catholic, asked Constance "if there wasn't a new book out by Isabel Clarke?" Poor Mary Ellen landed home, flayed by Connie's intellectual scorn, with a copy of the poems of Gertrude von Le Fort.

Tim Sullivan, Katie's husband, stopped me one night to ask me plaintively was there any law against Catholic books by real American authors, the way a plain man could learn more about the Church. "I've no doubt they're great books she has there,"

he said worriedly, "I realize that ; but it'd take a scholar entirely to plough his way through them. And the names of the writing people are certainly very foreign. Wouldn't you think she'd do more to push books by our own people ? Is there a law now against being only American ? I used to hear of a lot of good American Catholic writers, some good ones, too . . . long ago ; but there's not hide nor hair of them on that girl's shelves the day."

"You're behind the times, Tim," I said. "You're not keeping up with our neighbors, and Connie is. Haven't both Priestley and Sir Hugh Walpole addressed the Congregational Men's Club and Emil Ludwig and Thomas Mann lectured at the Reformed Synagogue ? It's in the American social consciousness to be instructed from abroad. Why should we as Catholics be laggard ?"

"Hmmm, faraway cows have long horns, 'tis true," said Tim doubtfully. "And I always was one willing to learn from anybody, no matter. But for my money give me this Maurice Leahy I see is talking up around Boston ; at least he has the name, and I hope the good drop in him. But I'll bet you these other people are not shelving their Emersons and their Longfellows and their Thoreaus, no matter what for-

aign propaganda they listen to. And I still say we should first encourage our own ; then and at long last, as the Duke said, turn to hear what rot the other fellow is blabbing about."

"Indeed, yes, Timothy," bobbed up the earnest voice of Mrs. Patrick Crowley, who happened along just then and caught the drift of our discussion at once, "I'm right with you there. According to Constance Casey, Catholic literature only started the day she enrolled with the Madames for their advanced courses. All ahead of that time was no good, says she. I know better, and you know better, and the old pastor knew better. There was a sight of powerful good books and reading in our old Sunday School library long before she'd even started in on the first lesson of the Baltimore Catechism."

The chat with Mrs. Crowley and Tim made me wonder more than ever, what *had* become of our Sunday School collection. I went over to the school one afternoon to ask Constance if by chance she knew ; but I stopped, transfixed, at the library door ; for inside, having it hot and heavy as we say, were Connie and that doughty antagonist, Mrs. Patrick Crowley. Between them on the floor were boxes and crates and rope-tied bundles of books. The

argument had those books as its basis, for one particularly heavy volume Mrs. Crowley was brandishing furiously in the air.

It was the *Life of the Blessed Virgin*, published by Peter F. Collier and dear to the homes of our fathers. This especial copy, I gathered, was one Mrs. Crowley had proudly presented to our old Sunday School library years ago. Constance, it seemed, having resurrected the old volumes at last from their storage place, after looking them over cursorily had decided that they were fit only for burning. She had been so unwise as to say that very thing to Mrs. Crowley.

"That's all they are . . . complete trash," insisted Connie. "Why they're the sort of thing that really should be on the Index."

"I'll *Index* you!" Mrs. Crowley kept answering. "The holy, good book we kept for years on the parlor table, that the old pastor always looked through when he'd come to the house! The *Life of the Blessed Virgin*!" she turned to me, "and the likes of her saying that she'd burn it!"

Constance has some slight concern for my judgment, whereas she has none for that of Mrs. Crowley. "I wish you'd look through them," she said. "If you do find anything of any value I'd be glad to keep

it ; but really all it is is a lot of old junk. I did think I might possibly find some early book of Chesterton's or Belloc's . . . but no, not one. Just a lot of antedated, old-style writers who are much better off forgotten."

I needed no second invitation. Books are books. This promised a better feast than the stalls along the quays of Paris or of dear Dublin ; and as a small boy I had found the Sunday School library soul-satisfying. Down on the floor I plumped, with an eager Mrs. Crowley quickly kneeling beside me . . . ready for what she hoped would be her hour of triumph.

"There's a full box there," she pointed out, "of fine looking books by a man named Shea. I was going to tell Mary Ellen of them, in case they'd be related. What about them ?"

So first to be rescued was John Gilmary Shea's four-volume history of the Church in the United States, his history of the Catholic missions among the Indians, and his *Perils of the Ocean and Wilderness* and *Discovery of the Mississippi Valley*.

Soon beside them were Charles Warren Stoddard's *South-Sea Idylls* and that famous first book about Father Damien, *The Lepers of Molokai*. Seven

volumes of the works of Bishop John England went with them, and twenty dusty tomes of the writings of Orestes A. Brownson.

I could hear Mrs. Crowley, with great grunting over her unaccustomed exertions, making her own pile for my inspection, as I paused to dip into Charles Carroll of Carrollton's journal of his visit to Canada in 1776 as one of the commissioners of the Continental Congress.

The familiar rattle of a rosary behind me made me look up. It was Reverend Mother. In a moment Mrs. Crowley was proudly displaying to her the treasure trove she had unearthed. "Christian Reid!" exclaimed Reverend Mother, "and Mrs. Sadlier and Anna Hanson Dorsey. Oh, the Sisters would love to get hold of some of these to read at Recreation. If you should find a book called *Espiritu Santo*, Mrs. Crowley . . . it was by Henrietta Dana Skinner . . . hold it out for me. It was always a great favorite of mine, and I'd love to re-read it."

"I will," said Mrs. Crowley. "And, Mother, look here! Here's one by Colonel Pat Guiney's daughter, Louise. I'll save that out for Katie Sullivan. Her father-in-law, the Pope's Johnny, knew Pat Guiney well. They served together in the War.

Katie'll get a great deal more kick out of this than from the poetry book she has now. 'Tis by someone who don't know how to rhyme even."

In the meantime, I had unearthed the *Lyrics* and *Later Lyrics* of Father John Banister Tabb and the *Poems, Patriotic and Religious* of Father Abram Ryan, and I laid them reverently beside a mint copy of Louise Imogene Guiney's *Patrins*. My pile now was growing in triple and quadruple rows : the novels of Frank Spearman and Maurice Francis Egan ; the essays on education of Bishop John Spalding ; the discourses and sermons of James Cardinal Gibbons, with a first edition of *The Faith of Our Fathers*, autographed to the old pastor, and a copy of *Our Christian Heritage*. I had James Jeffrey Roche's *Life of John Boyle O'Reilly* and his *The V-a-s-e, and Other Bric-a-brac*, from which I read, to the great glee of Mrs. Crowley and Reverend Mother, his threnody of the people who call themselves "Scotch-Irish."

"County Connaught men who die in the Masons !" cried Mrs. Crowley with a gay hoot ; and then I remembered that I had seen a copy of the essays of Austin O'Malley, and I found the correct version of his epigram for her.

I placed with Roche's books, Boyle O'Reilly's own collected verse and his novel *Moondyne* ; and the lives of Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII by the other O'Reilly, Bernard.

I was all but hidden in mounds of books, happily delving into a copy of *A Yankee in Ireland* by Paul Peppergrass, when the new pastor strolled into the library and found us all there — squatting on the floor. Reverend Mother rose to her feet abashed, her arms full of books ; but Mrs. Crowley . . . not a trifle awed . . . handed up to him blithely a spare volume she happened to have in her hand, and asked him to lean over and have a look at the Crowley coat of arms in O'Hart's *Irish Pedigrees*.

The book she had so nonchalantly presented to him was Archbishop Ireland's *The Church and Modern Society*, a book, he told her, to her great joy, for which he had been seeking for years. In less time than it takes to tell it, he had pulled up the skirts of his cassock and was crouched down with us ; and in a moment was exclaiming with delight because he had discovered *Memories of Hawthorne* by Mrs. Rose Lathrop. "That was Mother Alphonsa," he told our own Reverend Mother as he handed the book to her.

I wish I had time, or half the space again, to tell you all we found, from F. Marion Crawford to Joyce Kilmer, from Mrs. Hugh Fraser to Agnes Repplier. Reverend Mother added to her bundle for the Sisters, *Marie of the House D'Anters* and *The Wedding Bells of Glendalough* by Father Michael Earls ; and Mrs. Crowley asked if she could take Father Finn's *The Best Foot Forward* and Percy Wynn home for her little friend, Jimmie McCarthy.

The new pastor was fondling in turn Thomas D'Arcy McGee's *Catholic History of North America*, published he told me in 1855 and a grand source book, and what was evidently the apple of his eye, the *Letter to a Protestant Friend on the Holy Scriptures* by Father Prince Demetrius de Gallitzin, published in 1820 ; clutching them both fast as I handed him Father Morgan Sheedy's *Briefs for Our Times* that I might go on with my reading of T. A. Daly's *Macaroni Ballads*.

"So you don't think all these books are junk then, Father ?" piped up Mrs. Crowley finally, with a flirt of her head back toward Constance Casey.

"Junk ?" said the new pastor. "Indeed, no. It's a priceless collection we have here. It represents the whole being of the Church in America . . .

books that should be as familiar to us as Dickens and Thackeray. We're making splendid progress in the present, of course ; but these . . . these books are our very life, our life as Catholics in the United States ; they show our whole growth. See that all these books are kept in the cases with glass doors, protected, Miss Casey," he said. "Put the newer books on the open shelves."

But for a moment Constance did not hear him speaking to her. I saw that the volume of Mauriac she had ostentatiously picked up when he entered had been laid aside. Connie was deep in Elizabeth Jordan's story of *May Iverson's Career*.

CONCERNING

SERMONS



THE SHOCK was great last Sunday when in the distance, coming down Saint Mary's Street, I saw Constance Casey and Mrs. Patrick Crowley arm in arm, hobnobbing together like the most congenial of boon companions. As they drew nearer to me, I could see Connie's doll's hat and high-piled curls bobbing vigorously to the rhythm of her excited speech, and . . . *mirabile dictu* . . . Mrs. Crowley's veil-hung bonnet nodding complete assent to whatever Constance was saying.

Mrs. Patrick Crowley and Constance Casey, you see, are the opposing poles of Old Parish thought, word and deed. From all past indications I should have the more readily expected the twain of East and West to meet than to find the two of them in what seemed absolute agreement. They are both devout and pious women, but they approach the inner soul of their Faith from different angles. Connie is ex-

tremely intellectual and aesthetic, and no end liturgical ; Mrs. Crowley treads the way of Martha with positive common-sense practicality. And from the day that Connie returned to the Old Parish from her graduate year on the Continent studying with the Mesdames in their Rome and Paris convents, she and Mrs. Crowley have battled continuously for supremacy as arbiter of all Old Parish affairs outside the immediate ken of the new pastor.

"We have just heard the most simply divine sermon," Connie hailed me enthusiastically. "It was just too, too wonderful, really. But definitely."

"He was a grand talker," echoed Mrs. Crowley. "He had something to say, he knew how to say it, and he said it. It was a great treat, indeed. A plainer-speaking man I never listened to."

Neither Connie nor Mrs. Patrick are silent, reticent women. Once started they both began without further ado to pour forth lavish praise for preacher and sermon ; but they broke in upon each other so often, and counterpointed each other's remarks so frequently, that it was some time before I could get their story straight.

I had taken it for granted that they were on their way home from the High at the Old Parish church ;

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but the way in which they were raving about the sermon flabber-gasted me. I had been at the High and heard young Father McCabe, our curate, who . . . loveable priest as he is and the most comforting person possible on a sick call . . . is by no stretch of the imagination a Monsignor Sheen or a Father Gillis.

In fact I have always had more than a lingering suspicion that his sermons have been tediously worked over from the stilted and routine models in some *Preaching Handbook for Distressed Pastors and Harassed Curates*. He manages each year to do pretty well by the Mote and the Beam and not bad at all by the Widow's Groat ; but as often as I have heard it, I have never particularly cared for his elaborations on the subject of the Grain of Mustard Seed. He usually seems a little bit discouraged about his interpretation of that parable, himself.

Since on this Sunday morning he had only muttered vaguely through an interminable list of church notices that left time only for "a few well-chosen words" on the Gospel of the Day, I was at a loss to appreciate my companions' enthusiasm.

However, I finally did get the story clear. It was not at our own church, but down at the French they

were. It seems that Father Beauprêtre, assistant pastor at Notre Dame de Pitié, and a friend of Connie's through their joint interest in the Liturgical Arts Society, has begun a new series of sermons at the last Mass, in English, and designed especially for the younger people of his congregation. Father Beauprêtre is not only one of the most progressive priests of our diocese ; I gather also he is essentially an humanitarian.

I rather imagine that in the past he had noted sundry twistings and squirmings in the pews as pulpit discourses plodded on from Fifthly to Sixthly and Seventhly ; and, lulled by his own monotony, the preacher completely forgot to notice the watch he had placed upon the pulpit rail before him.

A sentence of Paul Claudel's that Father Beauprêtre happened upon a few weeks ago in his reading re-kindled an old promise he had made himself to try to adjust his preaching to his audience. "Some time," says Claudel, "there will be a book written which will be entitled : Sacred eloquence from the point of view of the consumer." It is in the consumers' interest at Notre Dame that Father Beauprêtre has planned his series of Sunday sermons.

"I don't know when I relished a sermon more,"

said Mrs. Crowley affably, "and I've heard a good many in my day, Mission Fathers and all. The only thing I can think of at the moment to compare it to is the Three Hours' Agony discourses at the Cathedral on Good Friday ; and they have sense enough not to let a local man try his hand at them. They always get a real good speaker from outside. Yes, indeed ; I learned things today that while I knew them before, still I hadn't got them quite straight, or had forgotten them. From my point of view, it was a very fine, worthwhile sermon. I'll go down with you, Miss Casey, next week again, and glad of the chance."

"Really, I think he's just too simply marvelous, and so intellectually satisfying," warbled Constance.

To gain the enthusiastic appreciation of people so opposite in their tastes and likings as sophisticated Constance and conservative Mrs. Crowley is a remarkable achievement. It was very apparent that Father Beauprêtre had correctly interpreted the consumer's viewpoint in our New England city at least. I was eager to find out the content of his sermons ; but indeed, before I could draw breath to ask, Mrs. Patrick Crowley was speaking with the emphasis that, in her, denotes complete satisfaction.

"I'm that sorry to have missed the one last week on the vestments and holy vessels of the Mass . . . not that the dear man could have told me anything I didn't already know, with the years I've put in as president of the Altar and Rosary. Still I would have liked to have heard it. The new set of vestments the new pastor just bought. I'm a little sceptical of them. I heard Father McCabe say that they were more on the Gothic order, so I suppose he bought them that they'd fit in better with the architecture of the church. Personally, I don't think they're at all a good match ; and I see no reason at all for giving up the good old Irish kind we have long been used to."

"Ample vestments," breathed Connie, "yes, he spoke of them. They're liturgical. They're correct . . . and so much more graceful, don't you think?"

"I didn't think so much of their being graceful as whether they were as full of grace as the old," said Mrs. Crowley with a return to her more familiar manner toward Connie. "Still, as I say, I am sorry to have missed that sermon. And more than that, the first one you were telling me about, on the Mass, itself. I find as I grow older that there's too many

people altogether whose knowledge of the Mass begins with the fact that you're late if you come in after the Book is changed ; that when the altar bell rings for the third time that's the signal for Holy Communion ; and that you stand for the last Gospel, and can start putting on your gloves and get ready to run.

"Oh, they do know a little more than that, I suppose, the most of them ; but I'd hate to have some of them try to explain the Holy Sacrifice to a non-Catholic. As far as any accurate knowledge goes, with them it's 'I believe, help thou my unbelief . . . I know, indeed, but spare my ignorance.' That would be about the size of it."

"But today, Mrs. Crowley," broke in Constance, anxious to get her oar in and paddle awhile, "didn't you think he explained the constitution of the material Church in just the clearest way ? With all the talk you hear of political ideologies now-a-days, wasn't it just the grandest thing ever to realize that the Church is the only great and true democracy ? I mean that, after all," she turned to me, "we are the body of the Church, and from us comes the priests as our representatives, and that the bishops are like senators, and that everything is voted on. And all that about diocesan consultors and chancery courts

and the Congregations at Rome and all. I had the most divine course in ecclesiastical jurisprudence at the convent, but it was an elective on Saturdays that I had to skip sometimes. Anyway, Madame wasn't awfully good in it . . . and I know most of those people this morning didn't know a thing about it all."

"Cardinals," spoke up Mrs. Crowley with evident relish. "Cardinals. I always knew I had the straight of it about cardinals ; but the breath I've wasted trying to explain it to Mary Ellen Shea. She would have it always that cardinals are over bishops, and I knew well that nobody is over bishops but the Holy Father, himself. No more than Monsignors are over priests. Higher they may be in rank but not in authority, as Father put it very nicely. You'd have no more right to be afraid of a Monsignor than you would of a country curate, as long as you were innocent of wrong-doing."

"Next Sunday you positively must go to hear him," Constance said to me. "He's going to take up the Holy Scriptures from the very beginning, their writing and their earliest translations right down to the Douay version."

"It will be all about the Irish monks, no doubt," beamed Mrs. Crowley, "and well worth hearing. I'll

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be there with bells on. I only wish the new pastor could get down there. But more by the same token, I must whisk myself off now. I've just about got time to pop into the convent and tell Reverend Mother all about it before the Sisters' dinner hour. Goodbye, now." She turned to leave us, but was back in a minute.

"I think instead of the convent I'll pop in on the new pastor. If Father Beauprêtre says those full vestments are not Protestant, I might be able to scrape up enough among the girls of the Altar and Rosary and myself to buy the church another set. I'll put it up to the pastor, anyway ; it will give me an opening.

"For I do wish he would establish a series of these sermons at our own High. After all, with us it's a repeaters' Mass. The Gospels could as well as not be interpreted at the earlier Masses. We would hear their explanation then. But those of us who go to the High in our parish have already 'received,' or at least been in attendance at the Seven, the Eight or the Nine.

"I've been in a way to pick up more knowledge of the Church than most, but there are lots haven't had my advantages. The parochial school after all is

new. The greater part of the Old Parish went to Sunday School only ; and while they can all give you the contents of the Baltimore Catechism from 'Who made you ?' and 'Who made the world ?' through to Extreme Unction, there's still lots of less important things they don't know.

"Every one of us knows the essentials of our Faith, but there's not a man nor woman in the Old Parish but has a great thirst to know more. Now you take when our Holy Father died ; we read all about the rites and ceremonies for his death and for the election of the new Pope in our daily newspapers. But so did others not of our Fold. And they were things that I felt we should know all about at first hand and long before, without waiting for the newspapers to tell us.

"I know there are books and pamphlets all about those matters, wherein he who runs may read. But while we're great readers in the Old Parish, we are not students ; and I don't recall that Isabel Clarke or Kathleen Norris ever had much to say about such things.

"We should be told them, and by the proper authority . . . the priest in the pulpit," she said with finality. "I shall tell the new pastor so."

I expect the announcement of a series of sermons of the kind no later than next Sunday. For as I walked away I could not help thinking, "Mrs. Crowley, you're the one to tell him — to have him stay told . . . told by and with the proper authority."

CONCERNING

VOTING



FEW DAYS ago Mrs. Patrick Crowley officially opened the more or less social season of the Old Parish with a high tea for the members of the *Bona Mors Confraternity*. If you are wondering why she entertained the *Bona Mors* rather than the Altar and Rosary Society of which she has been president for nigh on fifty years, I must let you at once into an Old Parish secret.

The Altar and Rosary membership is confined to the married women of the parish ; and for that reason there have been those like Aggie Kelly and Mary Ellen Shea, who no matter how hard they labored in the sanctuary on Holy Thursday or Corpus Christi could never really belong to the society. The rule of the sodality, you see, unfortunately barred them from intimate association with their own contemporaries ; for both Aggie and Mary Ellen, to put it lightly, *have* been younger . . . in their day.

That sort of situation was manifestly unfair ; especially so when you considered, as did Mrs. Patrick Crowley very seriously, that it was not at all Aggie's nor Mary's fault ; but just simply and plainly due to the stupidity of men . . . two men.

However, rules are rules and regulations are to be abided by ; and for a long time even Mrs. Crowley could see no way out of this horrible man-made mix-up. Some little while back, however, she discovered that in another parish in Boston the sodality fulfilling the same duties as her own was known as the *Bona Mors Confraternity*. She adopted that sodality forthwith, and by a little roundabout pressure on the new pastor succeeded in incorporating our own Altar and Rosary Society into its larger boundaries. For while I have a hazy idea that properly the *Bona Mors* is a *married* women's group, too, it is not so according to Mrs. Crowley's autocratic decree.

"*Bona Mors* means 'good death,' " said she, "and certainly a maid should have the same chance at a good death as any matron." We all agreed that Aggie and Mary Ellen, being listed in the eyes of Heaven in the more than special group of the holy called virgins, were certainly entitled to belong to

any confraternity that had a happy demise as its end and its beginning. And in a different way . . . but no less surely . . . so was the whole married membership of the Altar and Rosary. The question of a godly cessation of life was not one on which insular, worldly lines could be drawn.

Since Mrs. Crowley's august dictum, you may well imagine that if there is such a thing as a party on for the women of the Old Parish, that it is the *Bona Mors* gives it. You may well be sure that if there is anything on Mrs. Crowley's mind that she feels the women of the Old Parish should hear, it is not the restricted Altar and Rosary that she summons into conclave.

So in a sense the *Bona Mors* . . . Bony Mothers, the irreverent in the Old Parish call them . . . came primed to this meeting in Mrs. Crowley's little white cottage. And there was many a whispered supposition as "to what is she up to?" whenever, during the course of the party, she went back to the kitchen to put more tea on to draw or to get another plate of nutbread or the graham gems for which she is parish-famous.

She took her own time about telling "the girls." It was not until she heard a Mrs. Feeley, who was

Katie Sullivan's guest, asking if there was anyone who could read the tea leaves, that she rapped sharply on her old Belleek teapot and called for order. The sharp ringing on *that* teapot brought everyone to attention instanter, let me tell you ; for the old pastor brought that back to her from Ireland, and it is not an object she treats either severely or lightly.

"It's about voting," said Mrs. Crowley, without any preliminaries. "I have taken it upon myself to see that every woman in the Old Parish votes this coming November. . . ."

"Which way?" said Mary Ellen Shea, involuntarily. It would be more honest to say, I suppose, that the remark was frightened out of her, so unnerved and so anxious to please does she get when Mrs. Crowley starts to lay down the law.

"I said nothing about which way," Mrs. Crowley remarked coldly, "I said nothing about any office nor any man running for it, Mary Shea. I simply said this : that I was personally going to see that every woman in the Old Parish voted this year. Are you registered, Mary Shea?" She shot the question sharply.

"Yes . . . no . . . n-no. I don't know. I think I registered last year," stammered Mary miserably,

halfway to tears. "Last year my brother Dinnie wanted someone to get in . . . so I registered. But it's not a thing I do, I'm sure. My brother Dinnie does all the voting in my family. He's good at it."

"Sure, sure, 'tis a man's job," said the corpulent Mrs. Frank O'Brien in a grandmotherly way, leaning over to pat Mary Ellen's hand.

"So-o," said Mrs. Patrick Crowley tightly, "so-o-o ! It's a man's job is it, and a man's alone, how the country shall be run ? It's a man's job is it whether we shall hold our sacred peace or plunge into senseless war ; whether our boys shall be kept here for our defense or sent off to die in a foreign war, on alien soil ? It's only a man's job ; and we should sit idly by, our hands folded, and be led willy-nilly without saying a word into anything or everything that's false to ourselves, our God and our country ! Is that so ? Well, I say it isn't so ; and that's why I have you here today. And I'm surprised at the response I get . . . I'm shocked, indeed ! If it was Hitler, itself, the men wanted I suppose you'd sit back and accept that, wouldn't you ?"

"Oh, have a heart, Abbie," said Agnes Kelly, "we're not as dumb as all that. And speaking for myself, I certainly can say that ever since we women

got the vote I've been right there at the polling booth bright and early. Outside the primaries, of course, I never bothered about them ; they're all cut and dried."

"They wouldn't be, Agnes Kelly," retorted Mrs. Crowley emphatically, "if you and those like you did your duty. And I tell you right now, you'll go to the primaries this year or I'll know the reason why. And when you go, you'll make very careful choice wherever there are two or more candidates in the running. In elections as momentous as these in our time it behooves every one of us to get behind the right man, and see that he's put over."

"Who is he?" implored Mary Ellen, worriedly anxious to retrieve herself.

Mrs. Crowley patently ignored her, and swept on. "And when I speak of the right man, I speak of the man who, of your own knowledge, is clean and decent and honest, and pledges himself to give that sort of service to you. If by any strange chance there should be two like that, then vote for the man who will best represent *you*."

"Oh, you mean Congressmen and aldermen and the like of that," said Aggie Kelly with a shrug and a gay laugh. "Heavens, we thought you were talking

about a *Presidential* election. I'd been long wondering how you felt about that."

"I certainly *mean* Congressmen, representatives and senators," insisted Mrs. Crowley, "but I also mean state and city officials as well — down to the wharfinger and the keeper of the pound, if it comes to that.

"But in these present terrible days I do most exhort you . . . with all my soul . . . to be extra watchful and careful in your choosing of your representatives to Congress. They alone can change the way of our country. It rests with you and me," she said slowly, "what is to be the future of the country we love."

"Oh, Abbie, after all," said Katie Sullivan comfortably, "we're all safe here. Here in the Old Parish we've always known enough to vote the straight ticket right down the line. I guess we're all united there," she looked around with a smile, "we're all good . . ."

Mrs. Crowley broke in on Katie so sharply then that as far as this chronicle goes you may never know what party she was going to name.

"Well then, this year, Katherine Gross Sullivan," thundered Mrs. Crowley, and even pleasant Katie

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shrivelled at being addressed with such fearful formality, "you'll please skip this so-called all-important party allegiance of yours, and vote for the individual man *each time*. I intend myself, if I deem it necessary, to skip like a ram of the flock all over the whole ballot. I'll start at the very top ; and no outworn party allegiance will claim *me*, let me tell you. I never felt shame, but only great glory when my father told me that once he threw party to the winds and voted for a *man*. That was in 1860 . . . figure it out for yourselves," she said proudly.

"Oh, dear me," faltered Mary Ellen Shea, "but suppose there's one of your own running, and a better man up against him. You wouldn't have us vote against one of our own, would you surely ?"

"There's more than one of our own," said Mrs. Crowley with a grimly pleased smile, "will be just a bit surprised in their running for office this year ; or would be if they realized how sincerely and honestly I was going to ignore them on the ballot. I'm voting as an American this year more than ever, and I'm voting as a Catholic, too. That means I'm voting for the man I know is honest and true . . . no matter what his creed, color or label."

"I can see, Abbie, the way you're worked up about it," smiled Maria Killoran, "that I'd better take care that not only myself but the girls register early or I'll have my picture turned to the wall."

"Indeed, you'd better," said Mrs. Crowley with a swift, acknowledging smile, "all of you. Register and vote ! How you all vote is up to your own consciences. Not but what," her smile broadened, "I wouldn't be willing to give you a few pointers even about the men who head the tickets. However, what I do say most emphatically is that I'll acknowledge no woman in the Old Parish who does not register and vote, who thus ignores her duty. For to vote today is a duty in my eyes, no less than an honor and a privilege."

"Heavens to Betsy," chirped Aggie Kelly, "you sound like a Mission Father, Abbie. You've gotten even me nervous. What on earth does my vote matter ? What do all of our votes matter ?" She tittered nervously. "After all we're only a bunch of women. The men run the country," she said waspishly.

"From some of the women I've seen in high office, or next to near it that may be just as well," said Mrs.

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Crowley drily. "But shame on you, Agnes ! Your vote, my dear, matters as much as the vote of any man. Why, if everyone had your idea that their vote didn't matter then all the fine and decent people in the country . . . men *and* women . . . would stay away from the polls ; and then what would happen ?

"It might well happen that a comparatively small group of Red Communists or the like would be able to seize hold of the government. That's happened elsewhere and it could happen here. Do you think for a single solitary minute that there would have been war in Europe today, do you think that our own Church would have been persecuted in Catholic countries and Catholic sections of other countries if European women had the vote ? Not at all, not at all."

Constance Casey, invited on sufferance and in the larger interest of the issue on hand only, felt in the pause that she must speak up to show her modernity and sophistication.

"Mrs. Crowley," she said gaily, "you sound as if you were deadly afraid of a dictatorship and a foreign war, of wholesale divorce and legalized birth control . . . and I don't know what all."

“Maybe I am,” said Mrs. Crowley. “Maybe I am,” and she gave Maria Killoran a peremptory nod of her head to suggest that the party could well be considered over.

CONCERNING
THINGS HISTORICAL



WHEN THE new pastor made our parochial school library available for everyone in the Old Parish, he did a splendid thing. At the little fruit store on the corner of Saint Mary's Street where we all are accustomed to buy our morning and evening newspapers, Mike Pappas complained to me the other day that since the library opened he has had to return, unsold, three-quarters of his weekly stock of *Two Gun Tales*, *Real Heart Throb Weekly* and *Gangster Confessions*; but he also reported with a sigh of relief that *America* and *The Catholic Digest* sold out on the days of their arrival. And *that* never happened before.

Even in the bustle and rush of Christmas shopping, the library was not neglected. Mrs. Patrick Crowley avowed that it was indeed a great relief to come home after a hard day in the stores and be able to sit down with a book you knew was a good book,

and rest and relax over it with a good cup of hot tea. And the Finnegan girls, who work in O'Malley's Giftie Shoppe and had been nearly run off their feet with the hundreds of people coming in for Christmas cards, told me that they each went to bed with a copy of *Kristin Lavransdatter* as soon as they had had supper and a warm bath ; and that under the spell of Madame Undset's charm had saved their tempers each night against the next hard day.

In conjunction with the library we have already had three gloriously successful meetings of the Gerard Groote Reading Circle ; and the new pastor has, himself, presided over them. At the first meeting he lectured on *A Papal Chamberlain*, and *A Reporter at the Vatican Court* by the brilliant newspaperman, Thomas Morgan ; and then in the friendliest possible way told us of his own experiences in Rome as a student at the American College.

Then, the next week, when Catholic poetry was the topic selected, Constance Casey not only read us a number of the poems of Sister Madeleva, and read them very well, too ; but it also turned out that she had taken a course in English under Theodore Maynard, and that twice he had marked her term papers with a "B." Further than that even, she had

shaken hands with Joseph Campbell and Maurice Leahy at the close of lectures they had given ; and had once poured a cup of tea for Mrs. Aline Kilmer at the Carroll Club in New York. She made us feel very close to genius, indeed.

But no closer than did Mrs. Patrick Crowley at the third meeting of the circle, when the subject was Catholic journalism. For with a gleam in her eye and a voice trembling with pride, Mrs. Patrick rose up to tell of the time her own father had entertained both John Boyle O'Reilly and James Jeffrey Roche of *The Pilot* at dinner . . . in the very same house in which she is living today. The way she told it made us feel very historic.

I spoke up then to tell my own pride in the friendship of Thomas F. Meehan, the dean of Catholic journalism. Mrs. Crowley nodded approvingly. Her father, she said, knew Mr. Meehan's grandfather well and always took his paper, *The Irish American*, away back in the 'fifties. She remembered it well.

These approaches toward the great brought shy Dinnie Shea to his feet then with a story of his own about a great writer and a great and noble man. Old Dinnie . . . Mary Ellen's brother . . . was for years bow watchman on the *Girl of Plymouth*,

one of the splendid Queens of the Sound that sailed between Millington and New York.

One night, said Dinnie almost breathless with awe, who should the boat carry but His High Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons. And walking the deck to get the good sea air, if the Lord Cardinal didn't come up to Dinnie . . . where Dinnie was standing his watch . . . and speak to him as simple as one plain man to another. It was about the stars they talked, Dinnie told us. There were some stars Dinnie knew, that the High Cardinal did not ; but more . . . Dinnie confessed honestly . . . that His Eminence knew well, and could put a name to, that Dinnie had never heard of at all. It was because of that close connection with the man, ended Dinnie, that the book he had home now from the school library was *The Faith of Our Fathers*. He had been through it twice before and now he was starting it again. And very good reading it was, too, he said firmly.

It was reminiscences of that kind that very soon had the whole parish historically-minded. So that it was no wonder that when Tim Sullivan saw the piece in the Boston paper he read it out at once to his wife. Katie Sullivan cut out the clipping care-

fully and brought it over to show Mrs. Patrick Crowley. That is how the whole thing started ; for the indomitable Mrs. Crowley, easily aroused when it is a question of justice being shown, began immediately to canvass the Old Parish.

I had been away for several weeks on a lecture tour, so I missed all the initial excitement. No sooner was I back, however, than I heard not one but a dozen differing versions of Mrs. Crowley's latest crusade. None of them were at all clear to me ; for she seemed to have wrapped her real aims in a veil as dark and as impenetrable as that which hangs from her widow's bonnet. I did gather that the new pastor was enthusiastically supporting her in whatever it was at all she was up to ; and that even Constance Casey had been willingly drawn into line. None of my friendly gossips, however, were willing to speak freely until Mrs. Crowley had, herself, first interviewed me.

I am not more than ordinarily curious. I neither expect to die of curiosity like the one cat in the story, nor even like the other to make an especial journey to London to see the Queen. Indeed, although Her Majesty was at the New York World's Fair the same day as I, I must admit that so little curious was I

that I spent the hours of her presence delightfully gazing at the mermaids in the Aquacade.

However, in this case I really was interested ; and made no effort at hiding behind a pillar when I saw Mrs. Crowley coming down the broad aisle after the High. Indeed I hurried down the side aisle to meet her. Her thin, black-gloved hand caught my arm at the holy water font ; and as we left the church together she fumbled in the depths of her capacious black handbag and dragged up for me to read the clipping that had started this newest forward movement in the Old Parish.

The clipping held a newspaper account of an exhibition called *Church History in the Making* at the Protestant Episcopal diocesan house in a neighboring city ; a most interesting exhibition I thought as I read. Gathered together, for public display, were old silver, and communion cups, from churches with Colonial beginnings, various historical pamphlets and portraits, the rochet of an early bishop, and like objects of historical veneration.

I glanced at Mrs. Crowley perplexedly. I was at a loss to understand what meaning the clipping could hold for her. I saw objection and protest wrinkling her features. I could only attribute her

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indignation, as I glanced back at the clipping, to the mention of a processional cross as purely Keltic. But a slim finger jabbed at the last paragraph. That it was that had nettled her.

"The first church banner ever carried in this country," so the paragraph read, "is exhibited . . . a scarlet banner with a 'pelican in her piety' embroidered on it. There is a beautiful set of red and black vestments also . . . for requiem masses . . . considered the finest ecclesiastical embroidery in this country."

"Now *haven't* they the nerve!" ejaculated Mrs. Crowley, her old voice shrill with indignation. "To be telling stories like that ! Don't you believe them for one minute, not for one minute. First . . . how are you ?

"When I headed our Children of Mary . . . and that was all of forty-five years ago . . . we had the most beautiful banner that was ever carried inside a church or out ; and that banner wasn't new then. It was a real old banner at that time, older than this one by a long shot I'll stake my oath on it. And more by the same token, it had no funny looking pagan bird on it, but a very lovely representation of Our Lady.

“And if it’s vestments they’re talking about, I’ll match with any vestments they have, the set we gave the old pastor on his jubilee. No one but a Cardinal, itself, could touch the like of them with a ten foot pole, they were so beautiful. Embroidered, is it? Let me tell you . . . the vestments I speak about were not only what you might well call *richly* embroidered, but they were *handpainted* as well! Sister Mary Cyprian handpainted them right on the silk, which cost us over ten dollars a yard even in those days.”

I pointed out pacifically that the newspaper account undoubtedly referred only to the carrying of banners in an *Episcopal* church; and that the vestments mentioned might well be among the finest achieved by simple embroidery alone. However, I readily agreed that they could not at all compare ever with vestments that were not only heavy with embroidery, but . . . more than that, “hand-painted.”

“That’s what I thought,” said Mrs. Crowley much mollified, “I thought that; and when I went to the new pastor about it, that’s just what he said; that it was evident that they couldn’t have been hand-painted.

"No matter, that's only half the point. I've no quarrel with those people, mind. Indeed, I respect the decent pride they have in what belongs to them. The poor things are just misguided . . . like trimming up requiem vestments with red. Did you notice that ? I got a good laugh out of it, myself. Imagine being buried with the priest decked out in red ! It would be enough to make you stir in your casket, especially if you were I, and knew how things should be done.

"No, this is what got my goat. As I said to the new pastor, it's enough to rile you, the way the other kind take so much for granted, and everybody agrees to it . . . even to the newspapers. If it's Protestant it's old ; if it's antique it belongs to them, not us. You'd think that because we're Catholics we're all a bunch of 'newly-come-overs.'

"Well, indeed, I'm no 'Johnny-come-lately,' nor were my father and mother before me. Your own people, too, have been here this good while. And we're not the only ones ! Yes, and when history was going on here, it was *your* people and *my* people, and the rest of them that have gone before us in the Old Parish were in the very thick of it.

"We had banners and to spare when these people

had no banners at all ; and that isn't all we had. When I was a little girl, and we saw someone dressed up to kill, putting on a big front with little to back it up, we used to say 'hoops and no flour in the house.' Well, we've had our barrels of flour in the pantry, and we've been able to wear hoopskirts, too, in our day without being jeered at. And it's about time we told someone about it ; let the world know. There's very little light comes out from under a bushel basket.

"I was to the new pastor, as I said, and he's all one with me, heart and soul, on the idea that came to me after reading this clipping. We're going to hold an antique exhibition of Catholic things in the school hall that will show the world and his brother that we're as historical as anybody, barring maybe only the Indians. And more than that, the new pastor is going to set aside a room in the school, permanently, for an Old Parish Museum."

So many, many things that linked our parish with the historical past are gone, irretrievably. It is sad-denning that our sense of historicity has been so late in wakening. It is our good fortune, however, that our historical renaissance has come in Mrs. Crowley's lifetime. Her fourscore years span three genera-

tions of Old Parish history ; and the tales she heard from her elders as a girl are still fresh and clear in her memory.

I went over to the school a few days ago at her behest. A room had been set aside as a treasure chest, until the articles she and her followers had collected could be labeled and catalogued and cases made ready for them in the auditorium. I thought, at first glance, that the room resembled nothing so much as a rummage sale in a vacant shop. But as I walked about, with the new pastor as my guide, and saw how tenderly he lifted each small object and how carefully and caressingly he moved each larger one into view ; and as he spoke of them individually to me . . . I saw the piled-up, cluttered room as a sacred shrine.

“Look here,” he said, lifting two ponderous leather pouches. “I discovered these myself in the rectory attic. I had no idea what they were nor what use they could possibly have served ; but when I showed them to Mrs. Crowley, she knew them at once. They were old Father Sullivan’s saddlebags in the days when the whole diocese was his parish, and he made the rounds on his horse like a circuit preacher. It was in these he carried his vestments and the sacred

vessels ; and no doubt his altar stone. And see this . . . this strip of beading was in one of them. Wampum it is . . . Indian beadwork. You know that before he came here . . . in old Bishop Fenwick's time, more than a hundred years ago . . . Father Sullivan was a missionary priest to the Abenakis at Oldtown in Maine. The beading is frayed . . . but can't you see what it is , . . the little shell crosses? It is a stole worked for him by the women of the Passamaquoddies ! Mrs. Crowley remembers her father telling that six of the Indian chiefs came from Oldtown the year after Father Sullivan founded the Old Parish . . . bringing him such a stole.

"Here," he lifted a faded uniform coat, "is the uniform Mrs. Crowley's father wore at Antietam and Gettysburg ; and here's a forage cap that belonged to old John Shea, who was slain with General Custer at the Little Bighorn.

"See over there . . . that statue of Saint Patrick. I found that in the attic, too ; and Mrs. Crowley tells me that it was blessed by Father Mathew when he visited the Old Parish in 1849 or so.

"Yes, and stored away in an old hair trunk, wrapped in yards and yards of the most exquisite

ecclesiastical lace, I found a pewter chalice, lined with silver. I had no idea what it might be, but I sent it away for appraisal. My dear boy, the report has come back that it seems to be the craftsmanship of no less a man than *Paul Revere* ! It seems that he made just such a chalice for his friend, the saintly Bishop Cheverus. And do you know, the old records show that this countryside was many times made holy by that great man's presence. It could be ; it could be ! I am trying now to get a good copy of the portrait Gilbert Stuart made of him. More even than Father Sullivan, was Bishop Cheverus the first pastor of our parish.

"This old pine table," the new pastor after an interval quickened his interest again, "battered as it is, it is the Kennedy table. It was upon this table that Father Fitton celebrated the first Mass ever said in Millington, coming all the way by stage from Boston. Mrs. Crowley recalled hearing of the table when she was a girl. She found that the great-grandchildren of the Kennedys still had it and treasured it. The priests forgot, but the people remembered.

"And here are two of the badges that men of the Old Parish wore when they went to New York to see

President Lincoln lying in state ; and this black bunting, I am told, draped our church alike for Abraham Lincoln and Pius the Ninth, for President Garfield and the thirteenth Leo."

He opened a box. "This ivory and ebony crucifix was given old Captain Harrington by Bishop Latour when the Captain was stationed at Santa Fe. It is said to have belonged originally to Fra Juniper Serra. See how rough the beads are on this rosary ! They are gold nuggets. Tim Leary brought them home from Sutter's Creek in '49. His blessed mother had them made into a rosary.

"At the rectory," the new pastor continued, "I have the gold watch and the gold-headed cane that the Mayor and the aldermen and common council presented Father Sullivan for his great work among the sick and dying of all creeds in the cholera epidemic of 1857. And the Douay Bible that the Protestant ministers of Millington banded together and gave him at the same time, as their token of appreciation.

"I have the 'handpainted' jubilee vestments of which Mrs. Crowley so proudly speaks, and they are truly beautiful. Sister Cyprian was an unsung genius. The Bishop is going to lend us, too, some

of the historical vestments he has been able to secure and preserve. It is his hobby, you know, as other, but lesser, prelates collect gew-gaw antiques. The Church is his life, materially no less than spiritually.

"He has an alb that belonged to Bishop Carroll, and cut-steel shoe buckles that were worn by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, greatest of the Signers. He has a cope made for Father Sullivan, from brocaded silk that Jim Nugent brought back from the voyage on which Commodore Perry opened the ports of Japan to the world. Jim was Perry's boatswain."

I could show no gay enthusiasm, for everything that Father said brought its own cloud of thought. "I have," I ventured timidly, "the Old Country chest that my Grandmother Hurley carried her all in, when she came to this country. And our family tradition is that it was on that chest as a *mensa* that Mass was said coming over, these many long years ago.

"I have," I said, "a piece of the cable cut at Cienfuegos by my Uncle Johnnie, Mother's brother; and Uncle Matt, who now holds it, will undoubtedly offer the Congressional Medal of Honor that

Johnnie won for extraordinary heroism that time.”

“By all means, my boy,” said the new pastor, and then, smiling, “Unfortunately there does not seem to be a single bed in the Old Parish upon which Washington slept . . . nor Queen Elizabeth, for that matter. But if there should be, I know Mrs. Crowley will unearth it.”

“Father,” I said, “Washington, yes ; Bloody Bess, no. Or you don’t know Mrs. Crowley. But don’t underestimate her, nor minimize her powers. She told me tonight that she had just discovered that a ‘William of Galway’ had sailed with Columbus on the *Santa Maria*. She intends to canvass all the West of Ireland people in the parish tomorrow to see if any of them are not related to that William ; and did he hand anything down to them in his will.”

“Saint Brendan who discovered America pray for her,” said the new pastor very sincerely.

CONCERNING
CHRISTMAS



NOW HAD FALLEN the night before and had blanketed the city. The air this December Saturday morning was frosty, and the heavy snow in the churchyard sparkled in the sun. I stopped by the whitely shining hedge that separates the rectory grounds from the churchyard to admire the crystal shawl in which the snow had gently mantled the statue of the Virgin.

"I say it's not only artistic but very pious!" said a voice behind me. It was, of course, Mrs. Patrick Crowley. No one else in the Old Parish can speak with that same air of crisp but pleasant authority.

"Yes," she drew abreast of me, her black-draped figure positive against the whiteness of the snow, "Yes," I said, "Leave it. Don't touch it. It was a very pretty, pious gesture on the part of the snowflakes."

"It was Mary Ellen Shea," she explained in answer to my look of wonderment. "When we came

over earlier to fix the altar, Mary Ellen got the idea into her head that we should take out the handy steps we use to reach the higher candlesticks, and brush the snow off Our Lady. She thought it looked disrespectful to have her covered that way. But I said, No ; it not only gave the statue more beauty but that it gave me the feeling of a very delicate nice gesture on the part of the snow . . . to sort of try to keep her warm with a pretty extra cloak."

"She looks even lovelier now than when the children crown her with flowers in the spring," I said.

"That's just what I told Mary Ellen, but she has one of her sniffy colds in the head so that she can't see the beauty in God's snow that we can. I was only too glad to see it falling last night ; and I told her so. 'A green Chistmas and a full churchyard,' I told her. 'Anyone with the start of a cold that could well lead on to the influenza or double pneumonia ought to be good and glad to see the churchyard white.'"

"I judge Mary went home comforted," I said drily.

Mrs. Crowley's lips twitched in a quick amused smile. "I suppose I was a bit of a Job's comforter at that," she agreed. "Mary Ellen without doubt has her feet in a mustard bath this minute, is dosed

with quinine, and is laying siege to the saints that the snow stays on until Little Christmas at least.

"A-a-and *more* by the same token, speaking of Christmas, did you get one of these?" She unclasped her big black handbag and drew out a heavy linen envelop. "Open that and read it, and see what you think of it. It didn't come to me . . . I just borrowed it . . . but I'll tell you ahead of time that I don't think much of it."

I glanced at the envelop. It was addressed in a sprawling feminine hand to Bernadette, the O'Tooles' eldest. I looked at Mrs. Crowley inquiringly. "It's all right ; it's all right," she waved me on with her black-gloved hand. "She knows I have it, and that I planned on showing it to you. Either yourself or the new pastor, I said to her ; and she made no bones but that you should be the one. Read it, man, *read* it !"

The envelop held a formally written invitation requesting the pleasure of the company of Miss Bernadette O'Toole at a formal supper dance to be held at the residence of Miss Constance Casey, Thursday evening, December the twenty-fourth.

I was stupid, I suppose. I did not recognize the

inner significance of the day and date. "Now, isn't that nice?" I said.

"Nice, is it?" Mrs. Crowley broke forth in shocked anger. "Then it's your father — God rest him — wouldn't think it was nice; nor your dear mother's father — grand Matt Doran — either. *Nice*, says you, to be gallivanting out and sashaying around on Christmas Eve! Three hundred and sixty-five nights in the year, and that's the night you'd pick for your high jinks. I'm surprised at you. I really am; I'm surprised at you. The very idea — on Christmas Eve!"

I retreated as gracefully as I could, confusedly explaining that I had not noticed the date. But Mrs. Crowley was merely mollified. She was by no means forgiving. There was a steely accusing glint in her eyes whenever we met the week before Christmas. It was not until she learned — in that quick, if roundabout way that all things are sooner or later known in the Old Parish — that I had also received and regretted an invitation from Constance that her favor returned to me. She was reassured then that I stood firmly, as she did, for the old way of our parish in the celebrating of Christmas.

Christmas is a very gala occasion now in the Old Parish, much more gala than in the old days, I grant you. But it is less of a holyday and more of a holiday than in my boyhood, not so very long ago.

I went about the parish last year, I remember, as so many others were doing, to look at the individual festival decorations. To tell you the truth, I found a strange motley, among the lighted wreaths and jewelled Christmas trees. No less than four pine trees on Judge Corcoran's lawn were aglow with colored lights ; the McDermott's had their façade so strung with eerie blue bulbs that it looked like no more nor less than the haunted house in Tiverton ; and I failed to find any Christmas significance in the sparkling Moslem crescent over the fanlight of Teresa Mahoney's new Cape Cod cottage, nor in the great stocking outlined in electricity that the Clancy girls had fastened up outside their sun porch.

Mrs. Crowley came along with Maria Killoran as I was gazing at the stocking. "Looks as though they're hoping that Santy Claus will drop a man in it," said Mrs. Patrick tartly. "At their age they'll die hoping. Come, Maria, we've seen all the show now. I declare to Betsey," she turned to me, "there's everything up in the parish but Japanese lanterns.

I hope you're enjoying it. I'll still stick to my Christmas candle."

As a matter of fact, all the lights and all the ornamentation of the houses had given me no Christmas feeling, at all. They offered to me no more of the spirit of Christmas than Constance Casey's supper dance . . . which, by the way, was very slimly attended, and — at Mike Casey's indignant putting down of his foot — was summarily stopped at half past eleven, and the whole crew packed off to midnight Mass.

Things have changed, of course, even in the Old Parish where the spirit of the past lives longer than in most places. But when I was growing, Christmas Eve was a holy time when families were gathered close beneath their roofs. It was a tradition handed down from pious Irish ancestors, I suppose, that made your presence at home with your family an imperative and even sacred thing on Christmas Eve.

I don't know what my father would have done if the whole lot of us had not been present for the Christmas Eve supper, or if any one of us had dared suggest leaving the house afterwards. And I remember that Mother has said that her father had the same feeling. Father was very strict about it, al-

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though he was customarily a very genial, expansive, good-fellow sort of man, of whom you would have little expected such stern rigidity about a pious practice. Grandfather and he were little alike ; but they met in perfect kinship on that adherence to a tender old tradition. If the Holy Travellers *should* come by again in the night, and it was to light their way that the Christmas candle shone, then the whole family must be present to honor and welcome them, and receive their blessing. No laggard nor loiterer must be allowed to bring dark shame upon the household.

Christmas Eve, in our house, began at dusk when Father came home and formally, as the head of the house, lighted the Christmas candle. There again Irish traditions was strong. The man of the house must be the one to light the candle.

I recall vividly going one Christmas Eve before dusk, when I was midway grown, to Cousin Maria's house with my little bundle of gifts. Cousin Maria was the august and authoritative dowager of the family. Unmarried, she lived alone. I remember backing out of her presence ready to clatter happily down the stairs, relieved that the ordeal of thrusting my packages upon her was accomplished. She

called me back, and I trembled lest I had committed some awkwardness that the family would hear about later. I found her, very gentle and very tender, holding out to me a handful of matches.

"The man of a house should light the Christmas candle," she said. "I have always had to light my own . . . but tonight . . . you do it for me. A man should always do it."

Three foot tall our Christmas candle was, a plain tallow cylinder that Mr. Yolkmann, our Jewish grocer, had put aside for Mother, in its gray cardboard coating, as soon as his supply had entered the shop. Only such a traditionally tall candle would burn through the night ; for our Christmas candle was not snuffed until long after we had arisen Christmas morning. Rise early we did as youngsters to see what our stockings held ; but it was in the light of the Christmas candle that we emptied them, and its soft flickering flame was, as I think back, an essential part of the glamour of Christmas morning.

It was from Mr. Yolkmann, too, that Mother bought our Christmas turkey, secure in her tried faith in him of its youth and tenderness. But it was not from Mr. Yolkmann that the main dish of our Christmas Eve supper came. Of course, as

Catholics it was fish. Mr. Yolkmann knew that. Indeed, had Mother ordered other meat than turkey from him on the day before Christmas, I think he would have refused to serve her. "North of Ireland" mother's people may have been ; but of the Catholic strain ever, holding fast to their Faith since before the Plantations. That the eve of Christmas was a fast day, Mr. Yolkmann knew as well as we. That meant fish, which he did not carry in stock ; yet he would be quick to frown on a scatterbrained Catholic who had momentarily forgotten and sought to order chops.

It was the Catholic in us that made the Christmas Eve supper, fish ; it was the Irish in us that made the supper slightly gala ; but it was the Yankee in us, over several generations, that made that special supper — can you guess ? — oyster stew and fried clams.

Not the leathery lumps of brown chalk-coated gristle that were foully called fried clams at Ye Sygne of Ye Old Shyppe tea-room when I was in Rockport last summer ; the type that still makes me shudder as I pass pointing hands on wayside beach signs along the New England coast. Mother bathed her fried clams in golden milk and egg, and rolled them gently in the soft dust from old-fashioned

common crackers that she herself had broken, before she fried them watchfully in melted butter on the iron griddle. Nor was she sparing of cream in that special Christmas Eve oyster stew.

The very clams themselves came to her in the spirit of Christmas. They were no ordinary clams bought carelessly from the fishman whose brown tin horn blared through the neighborhood as he clucked on the tired brown horse ahead of his hunched cart ; nor did they come from beds of storage ice in the porcelain and steel compartments of one of the great markets down town. Not the clams for Christmas Eve.

Those clams were fresh dug, down Nanaquaket way ; and Jesse Shaw brought them to the house, in an oilcloth-covered basket on his arm, each year without fail. Jess' was as complete a Yankee as ever Joseph C. Lincoln tried to draw in his Cape Cod studies ; and he was very fond of my father, who occasionally in the summer used to go on fishing trips with him. Jess' was a prime individualist, and very definitely not "in trade." Occasionally, however, when he felt the spirit move him he would dig a bushel or so of clams, or rake up a mess of quahaugs, or draw in a few tautog or scup ; and then

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would turn up with his basket at our house or Jim Langford's or Frank Malone's, all fellow fishermen with my father. And Mother or the other sportsmen's wives would buy what he had.

Old Jess' was a Hardshell Baptist ; and his stout Yankee independence hated any idea of business-like regularity. Jess', I repeat, was *definitely* not in trade ; he was a man who occasionally saw fit to accommodate a few friends with the spoil of his labors. His visits with his basket had to be accepted as a privilege, much as they used to wring Mother's heart when she already had a roast in the oven, or had bought fish from the peddler the day before.

As a Hardshell Baptist and, I believe, a deacon in his church, Jess' was very little Catholic-minded ; and as a free-souled Yankee he hated the bonds of regularity, as I have said. However, as regularly as the years rolled by, Deacon Shaw appeared at the kitchen door each Christmas Eve with his own gift of a peck of freshly dug clams for our fast night special supper. It was always just the one peck and no more, carried in on his arm from Nanaquaket — four or five miles away — in storm or fair weather. And for those clams Mother was never allowed to pay.

I have said that it was tradition in our family — and in the parish — that no one stir from the house on Christmas Eve. When we were small, however, we all did venture out into the night just once, and for a few minutes only. Father, himself, shepherded us, with Mother, a shawl about her shoulders, holding up the oil lamp that lighted the entryway, lest we stumble on the darkened stoop. That was a brief five minutes before bedtime to have Father point out to us in the clear, starry heavens — and it always *was* clear on Christmas Eve — the one, bright shining star that we were never able to find on any other evening — the Christmas Star, the Star of Bethlehem.

When we had grown older, Father somewhat relaxed his rigid adherence to the old Christmas Eve tradition ; but only to pay tribute to the lovely custom of another family, who were old friends of our own. We still must meet for the Christmas Eve supper ; we still must remain together as a family for the evening ; and at half past eleven kneel together to say the welcoming Rosary for the King who was eternally re-born on Christmas Day. But the Rosary over, Father released us for a half hour from our watch for the Holy Family and we streamed from the

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house in a quick grabbing of overcoats and hats.

We streeled through the icy streets, pell-mell, in our haste to reach the house of the Sullivan "girls" — God rest their gallant Catholic souls — in time. We knew that we would find the sidewalks about their plain, frame house black with silent waiting figures in the light that streamed from every window. We would wait silently, too, until the bells in the City Hall steeple started chiming twelve. At the first stroke, the wide wreath-hung door would be flung open wide, and a swiftly moving shadow would pass from window to window raising them high.

Then from within, sung as I never again hope to hear it sung, rising gloriously on Sara's great soprano, rich with Elizabeth's deep alto, Marian at the piano, Julia turning the pages — singing all — would pour forth into the city a grandly inspiring welcome to the Little Lord.

And the crowds in the street, assembled through no invitation, through no public spreading of the word, but only because once they had passed and heard, and ever afterwards remembered yearly, echoed in their singing hearts :

*"Adeste Fideles, laeti triumphantes
Venite, venite in Bethlehem. . . ."*

Midnight Mass was never celebrated in the Old Parish, nor in our diocese. Today it is possible in a half hour's drive to reach another state and another diocese, and hear Mass at midnight. Constance Casey's group did it this year.

However, it was the first Mass on Christmas Day that meant most to us in the Old Parish : the five o'clock Mass for which we arose shivering in the bleakness of early dawn and made precarious, crunching way over the snow. Little dark groups like our own would come up every side street as we passed its head ; and the crisp air would ring jollily with the shouts of "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas, Mrs. Crowley." "Merry Christmas, John and Mary." "Merry Christmas . . . and the same to you and many of them." "Happy Christmas to you all." "Merry Christmas, Mr. Sullivan. . . ."

The five o'clock Christmas Mass was a solemn mass, at which the full choir sang . . . as they would later at the Eleven. But there was something in the spirit of the worshippers who had gathered in the chill church in the early morning that made the music of the choir and organ, and the sparkle of the altar candles, more truly part of the

feeling of Christmas. The Mass might not change — it is the same at all times and in all places — but its Holy Sacrifice seemed more truly echoed then, in the hearts of the people who had made a physical sacrifice to take part in it at that time.


Not that they thought of it as a sacrifice. “There’s only one real way to show the Lord how welcome He is,” said Mrs. Crowley, “and that by taking part in the Mass ; and at what Mass should you show real welcome ? At none but the very first one of the day.”

After Mass there was the visit down to Saint Joseph’s altar to see the Christmas Crib. Pine branches covered the roof of the stable and the Star twinkled through them rather coldly ; but real straw was spread on the floor and the figures were wondrously real to us.

In the Old Parish it was truly then the Holy Season of Christmas.

CONCERNING

THE PLAY

N OUR PARISH — perhaps it is a regrettable fault — the old has a great and deep charm for us. It is not only those who have moved away to the new parishes “up on the Hill” or “out North” or “at the Globe” that speak of it fondly as the Old Parish. We do ourselves, we who are still part of it, as were our fathers and our grandsires in the days when Catholicism was new and strange in Millington, when our parish was larger than any diocese of today — we also call it the Old Parish.

“Old books, old friends, old wine,” Goldsmith extolls in *She Stoops to Conquer* — and more by the same token you should have seen the great performance of that play the Mary Anderson Dramatic Society put on one year. You should have seen Mrs. Patrick Crowley in the part of Mrs. Hardcastle ! Ethel Barrymore, Grace George and Margaret Anglin had cause enough to look to their laurels *that*

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night ! Mary Anderson, herself, could alone have surpassed her — maybe. She was a caution ! She was a card !

In fact she was the whole deck of cards as far as I was concerned, for Father and Mother took me to see that great performance. I think, truly, it was a question either of leaving me at home alone or not going. Mrs. Murphy, my childhood nurse, and that of my youngers, had long since retired from the scene. It was a happy choice — to go, bringing me with them ; and hope for the best.

I am sure I did not disappoint them, for the whole evening was like fairyland to me ; the scintillating chandelier in the old Academy of Music — one of those great cutglass things that hung low and lighted the whole theatre — the orchestra in the pit ; the curtain showing romantic lovers meeting by a bridged stream ; the glare of footlights . . . and then . . .
THE PLAY !

I think I know *She Stoops to Conquer* as well as any ordinary man . . . in my green and salad high school days I was, so the Millington newspaper critics said, more than a passable Tony Lumpkin. Yet in the play as I acted in it, and in all the professional performances I have seen since, there was never any-

thing like Mrs. Patrick Crowley playing Mrs. Hardcastle. She, in my tender years, was the play to me, and must always be.

So much, indeed, did I rant for days upon end about "the funny lady" that outside church one Sunday Mother made a point of presenting me to Mrs. Patrick Crowley. She was graciousness and flattered benignity itself ; but her black veils frightened me ; and the story is still told in the family how I fled from her, shrieking, to the familiar, friendly veils of Mother Theresa shouting, "She's not funny. She's sad. That's not the one."

At all events, Mrs. Patrick Crowley and I have, in common, a deep love of the theatre. It is a present love, although I sometimes tax her memory and her patience by persistent dipping into the past. She loves the old, but as equally loves the new. It is I who claim that the great days of the theatre are over ; it is she who chides me severely for it. And it is just my luck, when I long to hear tales of Clara Morris or Barry Sullivan to have her switch to modernity and ask pertly, "What new play is Emmet Lavery working on now ?" In that moment I could consign Emmet and Robert Speaight and Jane Wyatt to kingdom come. Who are they . . . Catholic as

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they are . . . to interpose themselves between myself and stories of "Our Mary" ?

For it was in honor of the great and lovely Mary Anderson that the Old Parish Dramatic Society was named, in the days of the old pastor ; in Mrs. Patrick Crowley's heyday.

I know elders in the parish who claim that Mrs. Crowley was a lovelier *Juliet*, when the Mary Andersons put on the play, than Julia Marlowe ever was. Ned Meehan still has rather a lingering affection for Madame Modjeska in the part . . . but even old Ned admits that Mrs. Crowley spoke the Shakespeare plainer. She, herself, to me tosses her head at that. "She was a weak, namby-pamby, shilly-shallying sort of a girl," says Mrs. Crowley. "I could never get really into the spirit of her."

I can well believe, knowing Mrs. Crowley so well, that *Katherine* in *The Taming of the Shrew* was, as she herself considers, the role that did her most justice.

The day of the Mary Anderson Dramatic Society had long since passed before I reached maturity ; but the glory of its traditions remained with us.

So when at the close of the last meeting of the Gerard Groote Reading Circle, the new pastor hesi-

tantly asked if we thought the Old Parish would be interested in reviving our dramatic society, and becoming a link in the Catholic Theatre Movement, the enthusiasm we showed well nigh frightened the good man, I am sure.

Little did he know that in the regime of the old pastor our Mary Anderson Dramatic Society was the pride of the city. Its name came readily in its beginnings, not only because the great actress in *Ingomar and Parthenia* and *The Lady of Lyons* had been an idol among us for her beauty and her artistry; but . . . more than that . . . because each year when she came to our Academy of Music for a week or a day she slipped away always from her hotel each morning and knelt with us at Mass in the Old Parish church. Mrs. Patrick Crowley still tells of the unforgettable morning when she — rather young then — shared the same pew with “Our Mary.” Her rosary beads were lovely, says Mrs. Crowley, and she wore a sealskin sacque.

Over a period of years . . . until, indeed, the old pastor died . . . the Mary Andersons had a splendid record. They were the first to present *Pinafore* in Millington, with Marian Sullivan as *Little Buttercup* and her sisters, Sara and Elizabeth, as *Josephine*

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and *Hebe* ; there was little of Shakespeare they didn't do, from *Julius Caesar* on to *King Lear* ; and their Saint Patrick's Night Shows brought people from as far away as Boston.

In the later years of the society, the Saint Patrick's Night play was the banner event of the parish year. *The Colleen Bawn*, *Robert Emmet*, *The Shamrock and the Rose*, *The Kerry Gow* and *Arrah-na-Pogue*, or *The Wicklow Wedding* : the Mary Andersons gave them all. My sister and I had the wondrous experience for several years of being allowed to attend the special dress rehearsals that were given for the nuns of the Convent of the Ladies of Mercy up over the hill. It was a revelation to us to see Reverend Mother shaking with such laughter that she had to keep wiping her spectacles over and over ; and austere Sister William giggling so she could hardly stop. That was when my Aunt Ann — loveliness itself, with a Janice Meredith curl and a white rose tucked above it — had risen from the younger group to become leading lady. But Mrs. Patrick Crowley was still on hand to play croaking old hags, who for all their wildness still held a warm place in their heart for old Ireland.

Interest in the theatre had always been great in the Old Parish. Barring only the holy seasons of Lent and Advent there was never a time when we would not travel far for the chance to see a great actor or actress or a good play.

Oldsters like Mrs. Crowley, Ned Meehan and Larry O'Toole made proud claim that the Old Parish had seen all of the best that the theatre ever offered : *Monte Cristo* and *Ben Hur* ; Adelaide Ristori and Madame Janauschek ; Edwin Booth in all his repertory ; Clara Morris and Barry Sullivan ; Ada Rehan in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Henrietta Crossman as *Rosalind* ; Maude Adams and John Drew, Effie Shannon and Herbert Kelcey ; Nance O'Neill in *The Fires of St. John* and Margaret Anglin in *The Great Divide* : George M. Cohan in *Little Johnny Jones* ; Thomas E. Shea and the glorious Brothers Byrne in *Eight Bells*. We like to think that Ned Meehan knew . . . personally . . . that very one of the brothers who left the stage to study for the priesthood ; and that Mrs. Crowley was a distant cousin . . . on the mother's side . . . of Thomas E. Shea. It was that kinship that brought the great tragedian down one year from Boston,

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where he was acting, to coach the dress rehearsal of *The Bells*, when John Joseph Sweeney was playing *Matthias, the Polish Jew*.

So with that deep interest you may well imagine that when the new pastor called a meeting in the school auditorium to discuss possible plays for the first production of the revived dramatic club, there was hardly standing room.

The new pastor had scarcely called the meeting to order, indeed, when everyone's ardent enthusiasm began to overflow. Pat McCabe, who has been our first tenor these thirty years, was up on his feet at once with an eager cry that *The Kerry Gow* be unanimously chosen. *A Handful of Earth from My Poor Mother's Grave* is, you know, the song hit of the play. In the Old Parish it has been Pat McCabe's special offering at weddings and christenings since his voice changed. Much as we love Pat, we all stirred uneasily.

However, Constance Casey got the floor immediately to wither poor Patrick with scorn. At the very least, she said tossing her head, we might try to make *some* pretense toward intellectuality. Her own suggestion was that we choose *Days Without End* by Eugene O'Neill. Larry O'Toole, with a

hazy idea from somewhere back that this was the very same O'Neill he had seen and loved in *Monte Cristo*, and that the plays were no doubt cut from the same pattern, gave forth vigorous applause at once. Constance beamed at him ; but he stopped very suddenly when he caught a cold look in the new pastor's eyes.

He had not seen the play in question, the new pastor said, rather frigidly, as Constance sat down ; but from reviews he had read of other plays by the same man he thought Miss Casey's suggestion not quite in order for a parish performance. Poor Constance was squelched and sank back into her seat in confusion, while Larry O'Toole glared at her for misleading him, and after a moment gave Pat McCabe an approving nod.

It was Mary Gibbons, the teacher, who broke a stillness that was becoming embarrassing by proposing *The Cradle Song* of Martinez Sierra. Pat McCabe and Larry O'Toole voted that down quickly when they learned that the cast was largely female ; and Mrs. Crowley unexpectedly backed them by asserting that she thought it was a cause for scandal to have ordinary people dressing up as nuns and parading across a stage. She had heard of a case

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where a rich girl went to a fancy dress ball in a Sister's costume and never had any luck afterwards. "Three times divorced !" she uttered firmly.

That settled *The Cradle Song* as well as the other Sierra play, *The Kingdom of God*, which Connie Casey was getting ready to suggest I could see, once she had regained her composure. Constance rather fancies that her voice holds some of the rich throatiness of Ethel Barrymore's ; and for a time after her return to the Old Parish from boarding school more or less cultivated that very faint resemblance. She did, that is, until Mrs. Crowley, long annoyed by her false huskiness, one day blandly offered her a slippery elm lozenge "for your frog in the throat."

It was the new pastor who ventured a plea for *The First Legion*. He spoke of it so enthusiastically that for a time it seemed a certain choice. But such a wail of "Oh, Father !" went up from the Children of Mary and the junior girls' choir when they found that the play held no parts for them, that he, himself, was ruefully forced to rule it out quickly.

The unfortunate Constance bobbed up then with revived eagerness. Her idea was that we do a play from the repertory of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin,

say, *The Far-Off Hills* or *The New Gossoon*. What was the matter with *The Kerry Gow* or *The Shaughraun*, if it was an Irish play was wanted, Pat McCabe shouted at her. And Mrs. Patrick Crowley announced positively that she would leave the meeting and the society if they dared to think of putting on any of those plays that made decent people riot — with their blackening of the Church and the good name of the Irish. In vain, the new pastor tried to explain that there were Abbey plays . . . and Abbey plays. She would have none of them.

My own idea had been that three one-act plays might be a less ambitious undertaking for an initial production than a full length play. Mrs. Crowley had rather spiked my guns, for I had long cherished a deep desire to see her play *The Poor Old Woman* in Yeats' *Kathleen Ni Houlihan*. She would have given a performance, I felt sure, that would have ranked with that of Sara Allgood or the incomparable Maude Gonne McBride.

I brought up my idea, however ; and, as the new pastor nodded approvingly, mentioned *The Little Father of the Wilderness* by Austin Strong and Lloyd Osborne as a play that was not only very Cath-

olic, but although its production needs were simple also by its pageantry enlisted a large group of players. The last condition pleased everyone.

So very much encouraged I went on to suggest my second play, *Monsignor's Hour*, by Emmet Lavery. There were stony faces all about me. A Monsignor, I could see from the chill look in Mrs. Crowley's eye, was no man to be treated lightly ; and I certainly should be the one to know it. I am afraid that even Emmet Lavery fell in the grace of the Old Parish when I was bold to say that his Monsignor was really a very loveable character. I saw Mrs. Crowley whisper to Mary Ellen Shea. Mary rose timidly — as I broke off at a loss — to say that she felt that everyone wanted a real play — not acts like in vaudeville. I was put in my place. My single consolation was that the new pastor's left eye seemed to flicker at me almost imperceptibly.

Mrs. Crowley arose then to offer the suggestion that we do *The Upper Room* by Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson. She rather stressed the *Monsignor*, and again the new pastor's eye seemed a bit unsteady. However, the dramatic club at the Mesdames does that every Lent.

Then someone suggested *The Sign of the Cross* . . . an adherent of mine no doubt . . . probably Katherine Feeney, although the hall was so crowded I could not see. Several years back I had played the part of the villain, *Tigellinus*, when the Cathedral Players gave the Wilson Barrett drama.

Aggie Kelly was quickly on her feet, however, with the thought that the people would maybe like something lighter, something with a bit of singing in it or a good comedy . . . what about *Peg O' My Heart*? No one else, though, seemed very much interested in *Peg*. We all knew that Aggie had played the role years ago, and would expect to again, although she has grown no younger with the years.

Pat McCabe, however, backed Agnes strongly on the question of a play with singing; and since the full senior and junior choirs were present in force the vote in favor was a foregone conclusion.

We have decided not to join the Catholic Theatre Movement this year; but rehearsals are in full swing for a gala production of *The Chimes of Normandy*.

I met Constance Casey on the street yesterday. She told me that she expects to be in New York during the week that the Mary Andersons will put

on the operetta ; and that as soon as she gets there she is going to make a bee-line to get tickets for Helen Hayes in *Twelfth Night*.

“Ah, but you should have seen Mrs. Siddons in that . . .” I began teasingly.

“Well, when I sit through any *Chimes of Normandy* it will be the new Negro version . . . *in swing* !”

The Old Parish version will definitely not be that. I rather like the old operetta ; but I, too, am afraid that I will be absent from the Mary Andersons’ performance. I have just heard that the Elder Brewster Players at the Pilgrim Congregational church have chosen that very same night for their annual play. I want very much to see that. It will be Paul Claudel’s *The Tidings Brought to Mary*.

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